HM
The Hard Music Magazine

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Maylene & the Sons of Disaster
Living Sacrifice
Norma Jean
Immortal Souls
The Attending

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January 2012 • *Issue Number 152*
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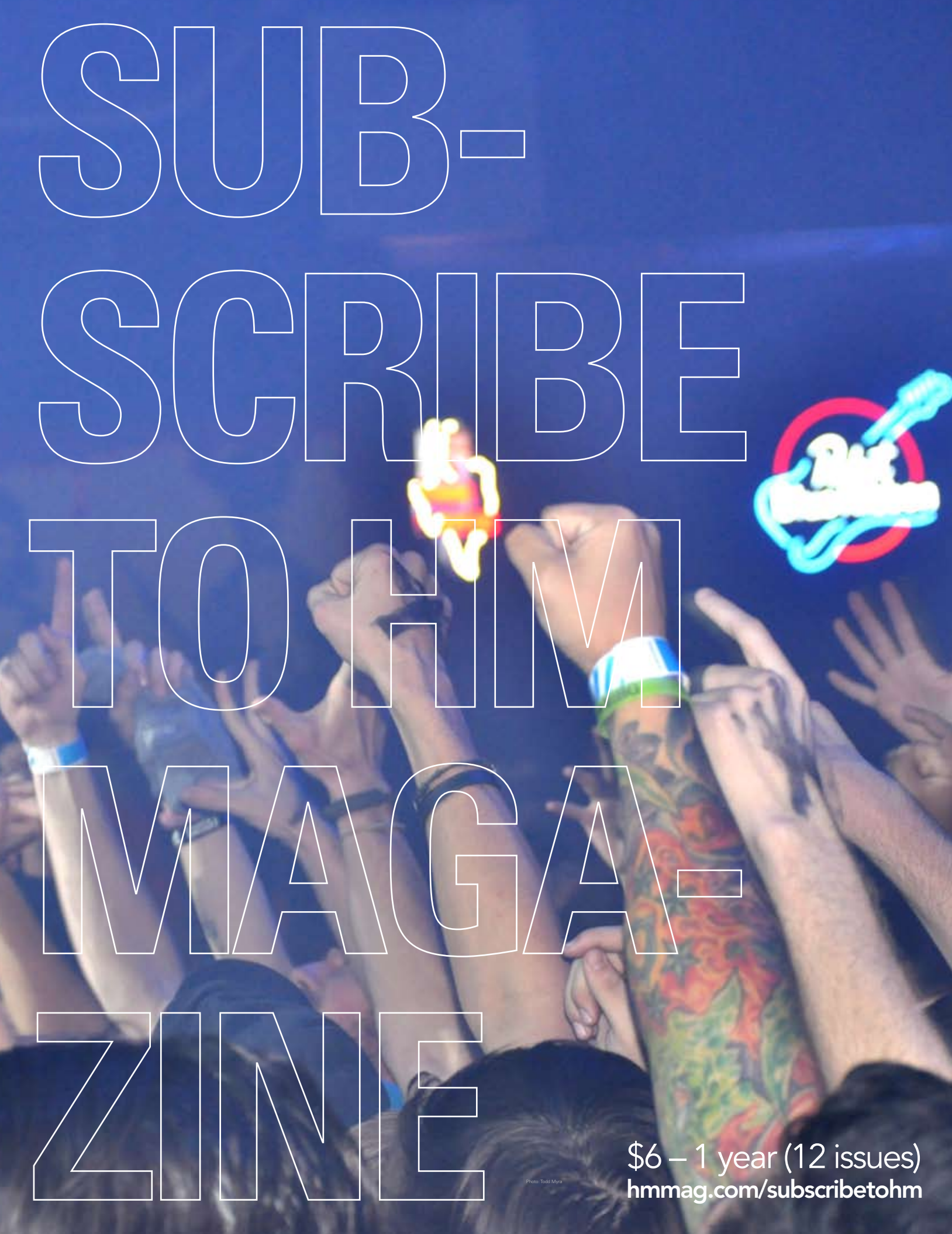
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LEXINGTON HEIGHTS

"When you stop focusing on your agenda, and focus on Jesus' agenda you find out how hard it is to get out of your comfort zone, but how rewarding it can be" says Jonathan Mikhail. "There is so much more to worship than just music. It's about giving up our lives for the One that gave up His for our freedom"

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TA

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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

HERE WE GO NOW

2011 has ended and a new year begins. There's lots of good music happening and being made right now. I'm really enjoying the marathon of prog captured on 3 CDs and 2 DVDs by Neal Morse. If his music wasn't so lovely and catchy, I'd use a phrase like "glutton for punishment," because he released this 5-disc package as a solo artist (*Testimony Two*), but also his infamous side project TransAtlantic has done the same (3 CDs/2 DVDs). Amazing and spot-on performances captured sonically and visually. Superb stuff. Look for some more coverage on all this in the February issue. Another prog supergroup has just released a new album as well, Ty Tabor (King's X), John Myung (Dream Theater) and Rod Morgenstein (Dixie Dregs, Winger) are The Jelly Jam and their new tunes are nothing to sneeze at. Less "prog-y" and more straight-up rock in the vein of King's X. And, on the more metal side of things, having a well-recorded DVD of a Living Sacrifice concert is probably better than having 'em play in your living room (and fewer things get broken). Yeah, I'm excited about music and look to the future with hope.

The future of HM Magazine has about 27 years of momentum behind it, but we could really use a big old dose of fan support to get it back to a healthy state. The digital-only move has yet to prove itself as a viable business move, but the idea sure looks good on paper (no pun intended, but it's a good one, eh?). I wish I had taken the months of October, November and December off after declaring HM Magazine out of print, but I couldn't help myself and thus the bonus/free December issue came out and now this one. It's a lot of work going monthly, so I'd certainly appreciate your prayers and, if you have the ability, offers of other help (ad sales, promotion, writing, article ideas, artwork, criticism).

And so ... you are now holding a rare printed copy of HM #152. Why is it all in black & white? Well, because when I looked into it, an all-color version costs $15.99 and I can get these b&w versions (with 30+ more pages) printed for only $6.

SPINNING AT HM NOW

JEREMY RIDDLE	*Furious*	Still digging this. Guy's name is Jeremy, not Joshua.
NEAL MORSE	*Testimony Two*	Full of prog/hard rock excellence (3+ hours!).
TRANSATLANTIC	*More Never is Enough*	Another 2DVD/3CD uber-talented live prog marathon.
LIVING SACRIFICE	*In Finite Live*	Simple, tight and brutal live set. Sounds great.
THE KINGS KIDS	*Set Sail and Seek...*	Really fun and good old school punk rock.
FOR KING & COUNTRY	*Crave*	These bros more rock than pop of sis (Rebecca St. J).
THE JELLY JAM	*Shall We Descend*	Another killer prog outfit. New tunes rock.

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Letters to the Edit

I WON THE HM IPAD 2 GIVEAWAY!

I can't thank you enough for the iPad gift. It's a great way to read the digital-only subscription of HM. I hope you have a Merry Christmas. Thank you.
–Ryan Jones, via email

Ed – I'm so stoked that the iPad 2 went to a man serving our country. Thanks for the photo.

DIGITAL ENCOURAGEMENT

I read your whole "Editor's Note" and I'm truly sorry to hear the news of HM going digital only, HOWEVER you have been one of the publications I found has made a great transition with the digital format, so I have only the utmost confidence in you. While it's a shame that print is becoming more and more limited, I know you will continue to create a great presence in the digital age. Best of luck to you, and I look forward to continued work with you in the future. Best,
–Jenna Rosen, via email

I believe God will bless this difficult decision. You're a good leader, Doug. I wanna support you in any way I can. And I will pray for this transition, my brother. Peace,
–Matt Hunt, via email

I admit I'll be sad to not get my print edition of HM anymore. But I feel like the example you're setting by giving something this important over to God to do with what He wishes even if it's not what you hoped would happen will be a strong testimony to other people who are struggling and maybe not quite as strong in their faith. Hopefully this will encourage other people to have the faith to let God be God.
God bless!
–Chad Sides, via email

We're still with you as you continue to cover the music we all love. You've got our prayers, too!
–Kathleen Burke, via email

You were a warrior through all this. You continue to be a warrior. Keep your chin up. I wish you the very best on the digital only side of your great content.
–Dan Michaels, via email

Sorry to hear it, but I am shocked you hung on as long as you did to the paper zine.
–Mike Delaney, via email

Yesterday we received our HM and again we are viewing this as not RIP HM Magazine, but SIP HM (Sabbatical in Peace) as we know and pray God brings it back soon with a new found purpose. Please keep in touch, Bro, and let Jane and I know how things are going and what we can do to continue to support you guys.
–Robert Shevlot, via email

Ed – Thanks for all the encouragement!

USER FRIENDLINESS

I have known for a while that the online-only publication was likely and I was not very excited about it. However, after reading much of the Oct/Nov/Dec 2011 issue online I was pleasantly surprised by how user-friendly it was. Most of all I'm glad that HM continues to exist regardless of the format. Your mag is one-of-a-kind and it makes it easy for me to successfully find great art with a great message. Thanks for the blessing you provide. In Him,
–Scott Hoefer, Meridian, ID

LOSIN' MY RE-LOG-IN

I seem to have misplaced the email with the login info for the digital version of my subscription. The only one I can find is for the November (Underoath) issue. Is there a new password each month? Or will we be able to use the app (iPhone & iPad) to automatically get each issue whenever they come out? I've been sticking with the print version since I can just toss it in my car to read on my lunch break & then donate it to the local Christian school's library when I finished. Glad to see HM continuing on with digital (even though I'm a huge fan of the print version). But Digital HM is still a million times better than No HM.
–Kevin Brennan, via email

Ed – Great questions. Your username/password are usually your email address and they no longer change with each issue. As far as apps go, I'm not happy with our app situation, so I hope to be improving that and at least putting out the HM iPad app myself, but it might take me awhile to get that going. Anytime you need help with your digital subscription, though, don't hesitate to ask (service@hmmag.com).

DIR EN GREY GRATITUDE

Thank you for interviewing Dir En Grey for the So Sez. I'm a big fan and they're one of my favorite bands. I don't blame them for dodging the religion questions. They didn't want to be judged about that aspect. But at least they didn't criticize, either; because that's not their style. They are respectful of beliefs, though, by not commenting, because it is a taboo issue. It's sad to see HM go out of print and I did buy the last issue that came out hoping to help it stay afloat.
–Tony Anderson, via website comment

YOU SUCK (A LITTLE)!

The *Scream the Prayer Tour* (online) review was a horrible review mixed with some good photographs. I was at this show and you really did it an injustice.
–Shawn Mtthw, via website comment

Ed – Sorry! Thanks for letting us know, though. Seriously! We need feedback like this, too.

HM

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SCRIPTURE Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path ... give me understanding according to Your Word ... May my lips overflow with praise, for You teach me Your decrees. May my tongue sing of Your Word..." (Psalm 119:105, 169, 171-172)

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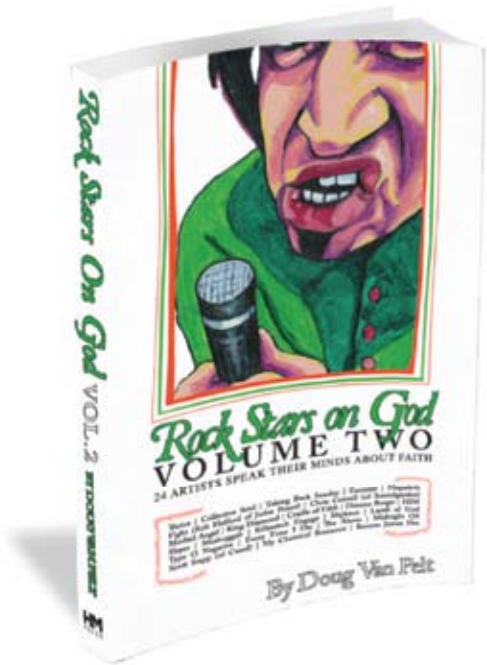

Volume 2 of the popular *Rock Stars on God* series. This collection of 25 interviews from the pages of HM Magazine features:

Thrice, Collective Soul, Taking Back Sunday, Extreme, Megadeth, Fight (Rob Halford, Judas Priest), Chris Cornell (Soundgarden), Morbid Angel, King Diamond, Cradle of Filth, Dimmu Borgir, HIM, Slayer, Meshuggah, Killswitch Engage, Slipknot, Lamb of God, Type O Negative, Every Time I Die, The Alarm, Midnight Oil, Scott Stapp (Creed), My Chemical Romance, Ronnie James Dio.

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HARDNEWS
Quick & concise

CM NEXUS LAUNCHES
FOCUSES ON HISTORY, MUSIC, MAGS

A new massive website focuses on history, music and magazines. The heritage of Christianity and modern music is well documented in a scant few places. Add one to the list: cmnexus.org. Recently launched, the CMnexus provides a unique view of Christian rock, through magazines. The site chronicles the artists of modern Christianity from the Jesus Movement forward. "The modern expressions of our faith are so much more than simply the music of our time," Daniel Billings, editor of the site states. "These magazines capture the meaning behind that music. If we don't make efforts to preserve them, we may eventually be left with only the music."
[http://cmnexus.org]

FOR TODAY ANNOUNCE TOUR
LIVE HEADLINE DATES INCLUDES MCMB

Christian metalcore band For Today are kicking off 2012 with the nationwide headlining *Fight The Silence Tour* presented by HK Army and *Substream Magazine*. The tour kicks off March 9th in Nashville, TN and runs through the end of April and will make stops throughout the country including the Never Say Never Fest, SXSW and New England Metal & Hardcore Festival before concluding on April 22nd. The tour features additional support from A Skylit Drive, Stick To Your Guns, MyChildren MyBride and Make Me Famous. For Today will also team up with several social justice organizations and sponsors to help raise money and awareness to help their cause. The mission statement of the *Fight The Silence Tour* is as follows: "There is no more revolutionary force on earth than a group of young people who are united and focused on one common goal..."

Photo: Lindsay Paramore

Your Memorial heading into Covenant Studios

This February Your Memorial will be heading into Covenant Studios to record their follow-up album to 2010's *Atonement*. The band expects to finish up the album in late spring for a summer 2012 release with Facedown Records. You'll be able to follow the band's process via video updates. "It's time for a new Your Memorial record," states the band. "We've been in the writing process on and off since early 2011 and right now we're working on wrapping up our third album and sorting out all of the ideas for pre-production. We're working with our friend Josh Barber, who also was the main engineer on our last record Atonement, at Covenant Studios in our home away from home Kansas City, MO. We are also really excited to be working with Josh Schroeder at Random Awesome Studio who will be mixing, mastering, and helping build soundscapes for the record. We're excited about how the songs are shaping up and can't wait to share them with everyone. We'll also be posting video updates of the whole recording process so be on the look out for those in the coming weeks!"

News bullets

With Increase has released a new EP called *Signs of the Time* on Blood & Ink Records.

Facedown Records has a new sampler that they're giving away free.

As I Lay Dying debuted its "Electric Eye" Video On Ultimate-Guitar.com. By the way, you *did* see the AILD feature article in the FREE bonus/ December/Christmas issue of HM Magazine, right?

Chevelle released a new album called *Hats Off to the Bull* on Epic Records.

Close Your Eyes have released its second video from their *Empty Hands and Heavy Hearts* album – "Keep The Lights On."

The Way have released its second album, called *Helpless But Not Hopeless* on Thumper Punk Records.

Gungor, **Leeland**, **David Crowder* Band** and **Megadeth** are a few of the many artists that have received GRAMMY nominations this year.

David Crowder*Band's final album, *Give Us Rest or (a requiem mass in c [the happiest of all keys])* comes out right around presstime (on January 10). It features 34 songs and, though it's reviewed in this issue, we had to wait for our February issue to unveil the final band interview and feature article. The Passion 2012 event at Atlanta's Georgia Dome will mark the final live performance for the band.

Broken Flesh has a new album, *Stripped, Stabbed & Crucified* coming out on Warclub Records.

For Today is scheduled to play this year's New England Metal and Hardcore Festival. Sunday's lineup seems like a deliberate church service/ show: For Today, **Sleeping Giant**, **MCMB**, **Texas in July**, **Hundredth**, **Counterparts**, **Gideon** and more...

The Afters are getting a couple of its songs some major television airplay. "Light Up the Sky" and "Lift Me Up" were played on *The Biggest Loser* and *You Deserve It*, respectively.

Industry Profile: Capitl Clothing Co.

MATTHEW TERIBERY TAKES BAND EXPERIENCE WITH MERCH, CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH OTHER BANDS AND EXTREME SPORTS ATHLETES

Briefly explain how and why you started the company.
Matthew Teribery: About 3 years ago I was in a hardcore band. At the time, I was in charge of all the finances and when we began to have our own band merchandise printed I became very interested in it. I loved the idea that you could put almost any idea into a design and have it printed on a shirt. It took a while after this before I decided that I wanted to do my own clothing line. It started with this idea but didn't actually get started until I won a small business grant from the college I attended, to get my company up and going. This is when Capitl Clothing became a reality.

How did you start working with artists?
I noticed a lot of bands repping clothing lines when I first began and this sparked an interest for me. I first started contacting smaller bands such as Royal and If I Were Thy Captain, who were both signed to InVogue Records. This expanded to more bands as well as bigger names such as The Color Morale, Texas in July and Chunk, NO! Captain Chunk! As of right now we have roughly 18 signed bands and about 40 unsigned bands that represent Capitl Clothing.

What do you like in a clothing line or even in a single design?
The most important aspects of a good clothing line are quality, customer service and a sense of direction. I truly believe these three things are needed to support a good brand. These aspects are the most important part of Capitl and something we can attribute our success to.

Do you snowboard, skate and play music yourself? What are the biggest challenges in each?
I do snowboard, and I have been for about 12 years now. I live 25 minutes from one of the top resorts in the Northeast and I actually work there as a snowboard instructor. One challenge with snowboarding is constantly making yourself a better rider by improving your riding techniques and pushing yourself to try new things. It's very important to find a good group of riders that will push you to challenge your riding and make you a better rider. I actually don't skateboard, but I do play guitar. I taught myself how to play guitar when I was a freshman in high school and I continue to play today. I was in a hardcore band for about two years that played locally. My passion is still heavier music, but lately I've been playing a lot of acoustic.

What are you looking for in a sponsorship relationship with an artist, athlete, etc?
The most important aspect when looking for bands/athletes to sponsor, whether it is a full sponsorship or a partial sponsorship, is their compassion for what they do and how they can encompass that passion with our product. We look for a good relationship with our sponsors, something that can be beneficial to both them and us. We also look for sponsors that are going to promote Capitl in a positive way.

How would a band featured in HM Magazine, for example, go about getting your attention to submit something for sponsorship consideration?
Easy, all they would have to do is look at the sponsorship requirements on our website under the Family section and see which sponsorship would fit them best. Next, they would need to email us and answer the questions that pertain to the sponsorship they're requesting about. We do get multiple sponsorship requests a day, but we do our best to evaluate each request and contact those who appeal to us.

What are some of your favorite bands and athletes to watch? Why?
The World Alive, Memphis May Fire, The Crimson Armada, I See Stars and Breathe Carolina. I like a wide variety of music and plenty more artists. As far as athlete's go I love watching my friends Cory Schneider and Zack Gerber throw down some great BMX edits. I also enjoy watching upcoming snowboarders and skateboarders.

Anything else you'd like to add?
I'd like to thank Doug Van Pelt and the rest of the crew at HM Magazine for reaching out to us. Also, be on the lookout for some big things and new products from us this upcoming year. Lastly, use the code HMMAG for 15% off your order.

BY DOUG VAN PELT

Sean Peck of **Cage** has recorded a metal version of "We Three Kings." All proceeds from iTunes will go to the charity "Metal For Cancer" to support cancer research. This is available for a strictly limited time.

O'Brother have announced a co-headlining US tour with Junius in February and March.

Sounds Familyre is distributing a new **Wovenhand** book, *Black of the Ink*, in North America (only, foreign parties contact Glitterhouse Records).

Paul Q-Pek sold out the Vive Les Arts venue in Killeen on December 23rd for a one-night-only one-man musical show based on the Scrooge character from *A Christmas Carol*. It was great.

As They Sleep announce *enTOURage* with special guests It Lies Within.

Sons and **sosaveme** are heading out on tour together in January and hosting social media contests for free concert tickets.

The Cornerstone Festival has announced a new setup on the grounds and lower ticket prices.

The Devil Wears Prada's *Zombie Slay* app is now available on the Android smart phone.

The City Harmonic's *Manifesto* album recently crossed the 100,000 threshhold of copies sold.

Downhere's **Marc Martel** quickly became a YouTube sensation with his cover of "Somebody to Love" (5-million hits which led to an appearance on the *Ellen Show*, where he received a standing ovation from the audience) and he's now officially the singer of the Queen Extravaganza tribute band.

Creations are entering the studio in January with producer Sonny Truelove at STL Studios in Sydney, Australia.

Sleeping Giant recently posted a music video for its song, "Tithemi."

Saving Grace post new video for its song, "Shekinah."

LIVE REPORT

Norma Jean *Pizza Riot 2011 Tour*

December 2

REVIEW & PHOTOS BY DOUG VAN PELT

(Austin, TX) The legendary Emo's club in Austin has closed its doors, but not before opening up (Emo's East) at a new location that slips into the shoes of another legendary club in Austin – The Back Room. This was my first show in the new/old venue and I was pleasantly surprised at how they renovated and reset the inside. It's now a really large room with a giant stage. Norma Jean came storming through on a multi-artist bill with Oh, Sleeper, Close Your Eyes, Stray from the Path, Lower than Atlantis and Ready the Messenger.

Close Your Eyes started off strong, sounding good, heavy and fast. Frontman Shane Raymond was all over the stage, pacing like a big cat waiting to get out of its cage. He never stood still. Try photographing *that* without using a flash! Dude went into the audience a few times, where the audience was only too willing to shout along to their songs. Tunes like "Empty Hands" and the passionate "Injustice" went over really well. The band came off like they were really having fun and very grateful to be there. It's always nice to feel that coming from the stage.

This show was **Oh, Sleeper**'s jump-on date for their start of this run and their enthusiasm showed. The band didn't appear rusty, either, as their tunes were sharp and in-focus. "Everybody jump!" was frontman Micah Kindard's command and the audience behind the barricade and back across the floor complied. It was a great way to keep warm on a chilly winter night. A few tunes from *Children of Fire* rang out early and those killer chiming/climbing double guitars in "Endseekers" really cut through the mix. The band chanted along to "Brace yourself!" and the lights were a boost to the experience. All in all, Oh, Sleeper got off to a great start. The third song offered some double lead vocals, which was intense. They played a few songs off *Son of the Morning*, which sounded nice and heavy. The mix of vocal styles was very pleasant as the occasional shriek was perfectly timed and blood curdlingly awesome.

Norma Jean came out and simply killed it. The band has broadened its sound over the years, but to still hear remnants of that chaotic early sound was delightful. Bassist Jake Shultz moved around all over the stage, lifting and swinging his bass around like a toy.

"Anybody out there know what a circle pit is?" Cory Brandan asked the crowd. "It's the simplest thing in the world: go fast and turn left, just like NASCAR!" The band waited until nearly the end to blast the crowd with "Memphis Will Be Laid to Waste." They utilized guest vocals on the chorus and Cory made his own personal visit to, on and over the barricade. The set was basically over. The crowd wouldn't settle for a typical ending, so they relentlessly called out for "one more song" and for a rare encore NJ brought "Killing Machine" with force.

Photos (clockwise from top): Close Your Eyes' Shane Raymond in a photographic moment; Oh, Sleeper's Micah Kinard; Raymond emoting; Norma Jean's Jake Shultz; and NJ's Cory Brandan belting it out.

Album: *IV: The Requiem for the Art of Death*
Label: Facedown/Dark Balance
Release Date: October 11, 2011
Members: Aki Särkioja, vocals/bass/lyrics; Esa Särkioja, lead guitar; Juha Kronqvist, drums; Marko Pekkarinen, rhythm guitar
RIYL: Dark Tranquility, Soilwork

immortalsouls.com

IMMORTAL SOULS

The extreme northern kingdoms making up Scandinavia have long been a hotbed for heavy metal – from Sweden's pioneering Christian bands Jerusalem and Leviticus and Finland's melodic Stratovarius, to the black metal bands of Norway, or Denmark's infamous King Diamond. Add to that growing list the name Immortal Souls, Finland's own melodic death metal band, and self-styled harbingers of "winter metal." This title comes naturally, as vocalist Aki growls out winter-themed verses, while the band churns out cold, speedy riffs, just like a proverbial blizzard. And that distinction sets the band apart from their many peers who use the term Viking metal to describe their music, recalling the region's own seafaring raider/adventurer forefathers.

I could point out the symbolism evoked by each descriptive: Viking mentality mainly being to rape, pillage, and plunder, as well as the dissatisfied soul bound to wander the earth forever; versus Winter metal conjuring up the almost holy vision of snowfall – white and pure, covering all trespasses, as well as the unpredictable and sometimes destructive forces that can be unleashed by nature. God or the devil – who do we align ourselves with? Am I taking the Winter and Viking motifs too far with this soliloquy? Probably, yes, but as the band was incommunicado for this story, they won't be able to defend themselves, and readers and critics alike will have to sniff out meanings for ourselves.

Immortal Souls are not rookies at this game. Brothers Aki and Esa have been honing their craft for 20 years now, and the result of all this woodshedding is a band at the top of its game, and surpassing many of its more famous peers in the Gothenburg death metal scene. Throughout its history, the band released two demos, two EPs and a full-length album, *Under the Northern Sky*, all of which are long out of print, but much of which was encapsulated later by Fear Dark on the two-disc set *Once Upon a Time in the North*, which is also now hard to find. *Ice Upon the Night* was released by Fear Dark in Europe in 2003 and in a stroke of brilliance the band licensed it in the U.S. and Canada to Facedown Records. By 2007 Immortal Souls switched labels and joined Dark Balance's roster, but both 2008's *Winterreich* and the new *The Requiem for the Art of Death* are still licensed by Facedown for the Western world, as well as a couple T-shirt designs for the new album. So, while Immortal Souls remains something of an underground band to fans in America, the last three albums are readily available here through Facedown Records and the momentum here is building towards a tour on our shores.

IV: The Requiem for the Art of Death has been out since the fall and follows the band's penchant for lyrics of the winter themed ilk. The IV refers, of course, to the band's fourth full-length offering, while this concept theme is broken down into *The Art of Death* in three acts. The band shot a video for the single "Nuclear Winter," which can probably still be viewed on YouTube. While it's unfortunate that we were unable to have a "conversation" with the band for this story, their new album is just screaming for coverage and when all is said and done Immortal Souls' music will speak for itself if you just give it a chance.

BY CHRIS GATTO

Album: *Are You Watching Closely?*
Label: Blood & Ink
Release Date: December 2011
Members: Corey Stroffolino, Dave Alcan, Tom Lavery, Brian DiCrescenzo
RIYL: Brand New, Thrice, Minus the Bear

facebook.com/theattending

THE ATTENDING

Photo: Ricky Chapman

In 2008 Corey Stroffolino departed from Life in Your Way and began working on solo material and recording with Greg Thomas (Greg has also recorded Shai Halud and Ambitions). After a few attempts and a few letdowns, Corey moved back home and rekindled his interest in his music and he started a band with David Alcan, Thomas Lavery and Brian DiCrescenzo. They are called The Attending.

This band is absolutely something else. With someone like Corey and his experience, you'd expect a much more hardcore sound (after all he was in Life In Your Way and has been filling in for Defeater for a few years now), but don't be fooled. The Attending has a much more progressive sound going for them. Their sound is very reminiscent of bands like Brand New.

Are You Watching Closely's underlying message is a good message to preach. It's all about examining and searching, whether it is for something bigger than us or just personal relationships. Realizing experiences are getting you to where you're going next. You just have to search for them.

The Attending is not your typical band at all. It's too hard to classify their genre. The best way to describe this band is just The Attending. A sound of their own. The music is very ambient and relaxing; not music to throw fists at. This album is meant for listening enjoyment. It's an experience. I recommend sitting down and listening to it on a good pair of headphones and just listening to every little intricate detail of this album. This album has a lot to absorb. You don't want to miss a single detail.

The Attending isn't dreaming too big. They just don't want to be a carbon copy of any bands. They just want support and love from their fans and for people to enjoy the music as much as they've enjoyed making it. They really want to get on the road and spread their music far. They're still a young band and need the support of a fan base.

Corey describes their lyrics as soulful. He says one of his favorite styles of music is gospel/soul music. He says he tries to incorporate soulful elements from gospel music to their style of music to make the sound that is The Attending. The lyrics are very soulful, but also incredibly abstract. You'll definitely need to read the lyrics a few times and study them to understand the true meaning behind them. With quotes like, "I'm telling the moon (Don't care what he thinks) to rise up around noon, swallow the sundown like a stiff drink." The album is filled with lyrics like this and others that are more thought-pondering.

Are You Watching Closely is something to add to your music collection. It's filled with powerful lyrics and strong melodies to make a very memorable album. We can only hope for more music and great tours from them. Stroffolino says it's going to be a little difficult getting on tour at first, but they'll be on the road at some point in 2012 and hopefully touring with good friends. They'd like to tour with bands like La Dispute (not quite their style, but weird enough to fit into their genre). If they should happen to come anywhere near you don't miss them. It would be sad to miss such a powerful band that has so much soul (who will also) play their hearts out for an audience they love. This is definitely a band to keep your eyes on during 2012. They're going to go places and hopefully reach their destinations fast.

BY NICK COTRUFO

TIM FOREMAN
SWITCHFOOT

Photo: Gary Rhodes

FIVE FRE

...has returned from the grave.

Five Iron Frenzy is one of the most-loved bands of the mid-to-late '90s to early 2000s. They were one of the leaders of the ska-punk movement and they were a Christian band making it on a secular label (Asian Man Records).

In 2010 Asian Man put out the documentary *The Rise and Fall of Five Iron Frenzy*. It sparked the question with band members and fans alike. "Will Five Iron Frenzy reunite?"

November 22, 2011 was announced as "Five Iron Frenzy Day." 11/22 was the day they played their last show in 2003. Now, eight years later after becoming parents, pastors and working a real job, Five Iron Frenzy is coming back from the grave.

I remember the one and only magical night I saw Five Iron Frenzy live. Some details are still a little fuzzy. I remember I saw them my freshman or sophomore year of high school with my church youth group. We saw them at a church in the Phoenix metro area. I was more excited to see my friend's punk band that was opening. I remember waiting in line to pay and this buff punk guy was handing out flyers for a Five Iron Frenzy CD release party. It was for either *Our Newest Record Ever*! or *Quantity Is Job 1*. I got into the show and watched my friend's band. Then later in the night Five Iron Frenzy took the stage. All I knew about this band is that they were a Christian version of Less Then Jake. They took the stage and the guy that gave me the flyer for the CD release party was on stage. I just thought he was on tour with them as a merch guy or something, seeing he was at the merch table most of the night. This was the first time I had ever seen a touring band doing work, and Five Iron put in tons of work that night. They also blew my mind live. They were tight, entertaining, crazy and fun. I remember Reese having a bottle of Louisiana hot sauce on stage and he would drink it. I thought that would screw up your vocals. I was proven wrong. Eight Five Iron records later Reese still has the voice of a ska-punk angel.

When I heard and saw the news that FIF was getting back together and they had reached their Kickstarter goal in 55 minutes, I was stoked to say the least. I emailed Gene of Lust Control to see if he would talk to the people that run HM to see if he could help me get a interview in HM with FIF. He emailed me a few weeks later saying that HM would love for me to do the interview and to get on it. I only had a week to put this thing together, so I emailed a few emails on the FIF website. FIF drummer Andy Verdecchio and saxophonist Leanor Till got back to me saying that they would be doing the interview.

When the band got back together I read two interviews – one with Reese and one with Leanor. Both had two different sides of the story of how the band got back together.

"When Reese was doing interviews for the DVD, Scott had brought up the idea of us getting back together," Andy said.

"Scott was working on songs and had mentioned they might sound great with all of us added to them. One conversation led to another and we realized we missed writing songs together and performing together." added Leanor.

"After about a couple of months it started to fizzle out and eventually we all just sort of moved on and forgot about it," Andy said.
From what I had read Leanor was asked by some kid at Cornerstone if Five Iron would ever reunite. "I said, 'I hope so' and I didn't see why it couldn't happen," said Leanor. After Cornerstone was over there was a little article that said, "Five Iron Frenzy, Cornerstone 2012." The band was blowing up her phone as she traveled back to Denver. "When the thing with Leanor happened, that was the catalyst for a new conversation regarding our reunion. That, combined with Joel Gratcyk (creator of our website) adding that cryptic countdown on our website (which was originally just a countdown to "Five Iron Frenzy Day"), was what really started the discussion again," Andy said.

With being married and parents, the band has "real jobs" to support their families ... as well as a few members not living in

IRON NZY

Denver anymore, I was wondering how the band was getting ready for playing shows again. "Well, those of us still living in Denver have been practicing once a week together and on our own whenever we can. One thing we've added is a playing to a click (metronome) live. Since we are not able to all practice in the same room at the same time very often we had to be creative with ways to not be sloppy live," stated Andy.

"The trick for all of us will be touring smartly." Leanor said. "This will most likely mean playing weekend shows, fests and flying to shows rather than driving. Our fans have been amazingly supportive (by donating to the Kickstarter fundraiser), so much so that will be able to play festivals and shows sooner than we had originally thought. So far we are confirmed to play Inside Out Soulfest and Joshuafest."

When I was in high school I was really getting into punk, hardcore, swing and ska. Less Than Jake was one of the leading bands that mixed punk and ska together. I remember getting Less Than Jake's *Losing Streak* CD. And in the booklet were some pictures. One of the pictures was the band standing around a Firebird. One of the guys in the band had a Fire Iron Frenzy shirt on. I thought it was so cool that a secular band would rock a Christian band shirt.

"Ha! I remember that," Andy laughed. "We were all talking about it. Yeah, that was pretty cool. We were all big fans, and we loved playing shows with them; so, yeah, it was a pretty cool thing to see."

"Less Than Jake have always been a fun band to tour with and I do hope our paths cross again," Leanor added.

Call it fate, God or Hell freezing over. One thing is certain. Five Iron Frenzy is back and will be touring this year with a record in 2013. Thanks in part to fans like you ... donating the band's goal of $30,000 in 55 minutes and, as I write this article, fans have donated $172,300 within 35 days of a 90-day Kickstarter campaign. They have reached 587% of their goal. This is the most successful campaign I have ever seen for a band getting back together after breaking up.

Wow.

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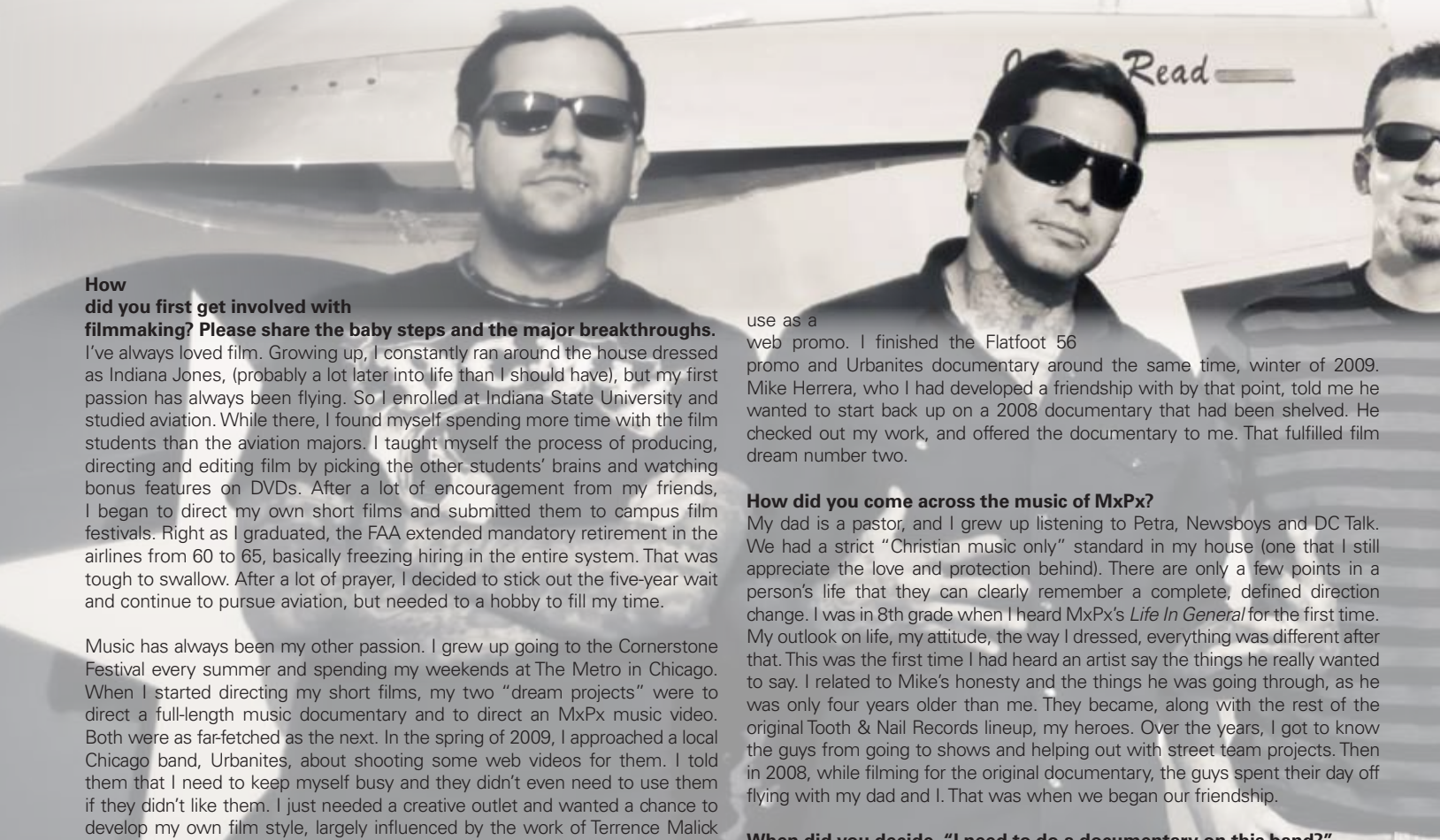
BY ROB SHAMELESS

BRYAN BUCHELT IS LUCKY. HE GOTTO FILM A DOCUMENTARY ON A BAND HE LOVES. BUT WE'RE JUST AS LUCKY NOW, TOO, BECAUSE WE GET TO WATCH IT AND VICARIOUSLY HANG OUT WITH MXPX. HOW COOL IS THAT? PLENTY...



FLY TO BRE

FILMING A BAND AT THE CROSSROADS

BY DOUG VAN PELT

How did you first get involved with filmmaking? Please share the baby steps and the major breakthroughs.
I've always loved film. Growing up, I constantly ran around the house dressed as Indiana Jones, (probably a lot later into life than I should have), but my first passion has always been flying. So I enrolled at Indiana State University and studied aviation. While there, I found myself spending more time with the film students than the aviation majors. I taught myself the process of producing, directing and editing film by picking the other students' brains and watching bonus features on DVDs. After a lot of encouragement from my friends, I began to direct my own short films and submitted them to campus film festivals. Right as I graduated, the FAA extended mandatory retirement in the airlines from 60 to 65, basically freezing hiring in the entire system. That was tough to swallow. After a lot of prayer, I decided to stick out the five-year wait and continue to pursue aviation, but needed to a hobby to fill my time.

Music has always been my other passion. I grew up going to the Cornerstone Festival every summer and spending my weekends at The Metro in Chicago. When I started directing my short films, my two "dream projects" were to direct a full-length music documentary and to direct an MxPx music video. Both were as far-fetched as the next. In the spring of 2009, I approached a local Chicago band, Urbanites, about shooting some web videos for them. I told them that I need to keep myself busy and they didn't even need to use them if they didn't like them. I just needed a creative outlet and wanted a chance to develop my own film style, largely influenced by the work of Terrence Malick and Cameron Crowe. Not only did the band agree, but after shooting three web music videos, they asked if I would like to direct a documentary to go along with their upcoming EP. That fulfilled film dream number one.

While filming at SXSW, I met part of the band's management team, who also manages Flatfoot 56. He told me he loved what he had seen and invited me to head to Cornerstone with them, to film the band's annual themed midnight show to use as a web promo. I finished the Flatfoot 56 promo and Urbanites documentary around the same time, winter of 2009. Mike Herrera, who I had developed a friendship with by that point, told me he wanted to start back up on a 2008 documentary that had been shelved. He checked out my work, and offered the documentary to me. That fulfilled film dream number two.

How did you come across the music of MxPx?
My dad is a pastor, and I grew up listening to Petra, Newsboys and DC Talk. We had a strict "Christian music only" standard in my house (one that I still appreciate the love and protection behind). There are only a few points in a person's life that they can clearly remember a complete, defined direction change. I was in 8th grade when I heard MxPx's *Life In General* for the first time. My outlook on life, my attitude, the way I dressed, everything was different after that. This was the first time I had heard an artist say the things he really wanted to say. I related to Mike's honesty and the things he was going through, as he was only four years older than me. They became, along with the rest of the original Tooth & Nail Records lineup, my heroes. Over the years, I got to know the guys from going to shows and helping out with street team projects. Then in 2008, while filming for the original documentary, the guys spent their day off flying with my dad and I. That was when we began our friendship.

When did you decide, "I need to do a documentary on this band?"
I kinda touched on this. But since the moment I picked up a camera, I dreamed about directing an MxPx music video. This was the craziest of the crazy dreams you could possibly have. This would never happen. Then in 2008 when I got to be *in* their documentary, well that was one of those once-in-a-lifetime experiences for me. Fast forward to 2010 and Mike calling me and asking if I would like to direct their entire film... People often ask me what that feeling was like. I can't answer it, I don't have the words.

I'm curious if there were times where you thought the future of MxPx was in jeopardy and perhaps your documentary, too...?
Yes, absolutely! When I started this project, I was simply taking 2008 tour footage and showing what life was like for the band on the road, which was something people had not seen before. I was not shooting anything. Once I heard about the *Life In General* show in Las Vegas and that Yuri was leaving, I had several different emotions. On one hand, I will always be a fan, and that was heartbreaking. On the other, as a friend, I understood and wanted the best for him. I called Mike and told him that I felt like this needed to be captured and documented. We needed to retool the documentary so that Yuri leaving and the band's future would be the storyline carrying the movie. He agreed, and I flew out to Vegas. Shortly after that, the band announced the Seattle *Life In General* show and Yuri remaining a studio-only member of the band. At that point, I retooled the documentary again to follow that development. And ultimately that was the right move. It was a happy ending, and ironically the whole process provided a Disney-esque emotional plot roller coaster, which I think makes it more compelling. Ha.

What were some of the biggest lessons learned while making this film?
One of the biggest lessons I learned was using archival footage. I received about 50 hours of raw footage to capture, watch, sort, edit, etc. I think we guessed we were trans-coding footage from something like seven or eight different cameras over the course of several technology changes. For a while, I thought that my lack of experience or college training was making the job harder for me, but after talking to my friends that went to film school, they didn't know either! I was in no-man's land. It was definitely a labor of love.

What gear did you use to light, shoot, record audio, edit/mix and post-produce?
I use a Canon XH-A1s camera and a Sennheiser ME-66 Shotgun Mic with the K6 power module. Yes, I commit the greatest sin a filmmaker can by using a PC. I use *Sony Vegas Pro* to edit/mix and *Adobe Premiere Pro* for post-production. I've been really impressed and they do what I need them to.

How do you feel about the final product?
Overall, I'm very happy with it. Any artist will tell you there are minor things that they want changed, most of which no one would notice anyways. It's hard working with something that's 60% your film, and 40% someone else's, but I think we made it work.

What have the band members said about the film?
I've talked with Mike about it the most. He was actively involved in the process. He's been so encouraging and great to work with. I think the thing that surprised me the most was his ability to trust my decisions and allow me to work. It's incredibly rare for an artist to say, "Here is my art and livelihood. I trust you with it, create what you want." That's an honor I don't take lightly.

Not a lot of music documentaries present their story without a lot of music/concert footage, etc. I think you succeeded with your approach. What were the reasons you took this route?
Thank you! It's funny you ask, because it's something I received a lot of push-back on when originally brainstorming. I very intentionally chose not to include a lot of live footage, because I wanted the film to build and the live footage at the end to be the payoff. There are already three MxPx films with tons of live footage. I wanted to use the time I had to tell this chapter in their career. The other reason is because I think that often times, (not always) filmmakers use live footage as a crutch, or filler, in place of a lacking story. MxPx has more richness to their journey than I could possibly tell in five documentaries. I don't need a crutch when I'm working with a band of this caliber. That's not a compliment to me, as much as it is to the band and their legacy.

How much of a challenge was it to record "Punk Rawk Show" that shows up at the end?
Besides getting kicked in the face, not too difficult. Ha ha. Actually, we learned a lot from shooting in Vegas. That trip was so last-minute for me, that we were not able to get anyone to multi-track the show, so our audio came out terrible. When we went to Seattle, we had plenty of time to secure someone to record the audio properly. We filmed the entire show and I believe used six cameras, including one duct-taped to a pipe in the back of the room for the wide shot. Hopefully, down the road we'll release more footage from the show.

What were some of the funniest stories you came across?
Oh man, hearing all of the private stories from the band's history was just insane. There are a few, but I think the funniest one was the original story of the song "Yuri Wakes Up Screaming." Yes, it is a real thing Yuri does. On one of the band's first tours, everyone was crashed out on the floor of a friend's house and suddenly Yuri woke up screaming about The Muppets. Ha ha. I asked Mike if he was worried about his friend or if it scared him, he said, "No, because he was screaming about Muppets!"

Was all the footage yours or did you use some the band had? (I get the impression, like in Singapore/Thailand/wherever, that it was something the band provided).
No, it was not all mine. All of the high-def stuff in Bremerton, Seattle and Las Vegas is mine, but everything else was provided on DV tape. Even the interviews were recorded by Mike. I provided a list of questions I needed and Mike sent over the footage. Working out of Chicago and on a DIY budget, we just had to make it work and I think we did. It added an interesting dynamic. I don't know if I ever want to work with that much archival footage again, but I'm glad I at least did it once. Ha ha.

What are your plans for this release as a DVD?
Our main concern was just getting it released. This film was produced and funded 100% by the band and myself. I'm really proud of that. With that said, working outside of a record label or studio makes it difficult to distribute. Now that the film is out, our next goal is getting it in people's hands. El Shaddai Records just picked us up for a release in Australia and New Zealand, which is incredible. Hopefully we'll be able to get it out everywhere else soon.

What's next on the horizon for you?
Right now I'm just helping Mike out with some promotional stuff for the upcoming record. I'm probably going to take a month or two off and see what doors open now that the film is released. I finally got a job flying full-time for a charter company, operating in the suburbs of Chicago, but I'm really excited at the prospect of working with more bands as well.

Did I hear that you were familiar with *HM Magazine*? Any thoughts on it – either through the years or the future as we journey forward in a digital-only format?
Yes! *HM Magazine* was my very first subscription! A friend of mine gave me a copy in 1997, I believe. It had the Supertones on the cover, and I was completely hooked! Nobody in my town listened to punk, much less Christian punk. *HM* was an huge part of my love for heavy music. In fact, I still have back copies in the pockets of my car for people in the back seat. Couldn't make that up! I have mixed emotions about the digital-only format. I will always love getting hard-copy magazines, but I'm stoked at the idea of the magazine going monthly! So, overall I'm stoked for the future of the magazine. It has definitely blessed my life.

Anything else you'd like to add?
Nope, that's it! Like I said, I really appreciate you including me in *HM*. It's such an honor. My company website is snaprollstudios.com. Thanks so much for doing this. It's a huge honor to be included in one of my all-time favorite magazines!

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EMERTON

If you've learned anything from the left-of-center art of Danielson, it should be: When faced with freakish art, don't laugh, join in the dance. So, next time you see a cardboard robot walking around the grounds of the Cornerstone Festival, get in line and follow the zaniness that is The Skies Revolt. You're sure to have a good time.

Give us a broad overview of this new project, this full-length album. Go as in-depth as you'd like.
"The new album (*Some Kind of Cosmonaut*) is definitely our biggest undertaking by far," explains "sideman"/vocalist, David Prindle. "We spent more time in the studio then we ever have before. I wanted to make something special, something that will hopefully get some people swallowed up in the music like I have been swallowed up in music. With offers from labels we have had to make the hard decision between putting it out ourselves or through a label. We decided for now to keep it an independent release and put it out ourselves, but to put a lot of promotion into it. To do what we have never done before and promote it beyond some posts on our website and touring. So we have saved money and sold everything we can sell to make a 'budget' to work within. Mike Cervantes from Thefoxboro recorded it. We made a music video, set up some contests and hired the same people that record labels use to promote their albums. We also filmed a video based (on) choose your own adventure that we are putting up on our website to go along with the new album. Since we don't have a lot of money, we are having to get creative."

Tell us about the contests you are going to have.
"The first contest we have we are giving away a Super Nintendo. We want to have people draw us pictures of action and adventure and email them to us at superdupernintendo@gmail.com. Once we receive the pictures we are going to post them in a photo album on our facebook page. The person whose picture gets the most 'likes' wins the Super Nintendo. We have more details on our website at theskiesrevolt.com.

"The second one is not really a contest but more of just a fun thing that we want to do. We re-recorded the song 'False Glory and Praise' from *Plastic Revolution*. We want people to send us in videos of them doing dance moves to the song. We are then going to splice as many of them as we can together to make a music video for the song. More information for that is also on our website."

Tell us about the video.
"A new music video is long overdue for us. When I was in college I made us a music video for our song 'The Transitive Deficiency.' Since then I haven't made anything for us, but I've made videos for other people. I decided I really needed to make another video for us. So near the end of last winter, I went out with my photographer friend, Ryan P., who everyone should check out, and we took a bunch of footage of our town Grand Rapids, Michigan, but the footage sat for a long time. Then this summer when we were recording the new album I started working with the footage. I wanted the video to be something different, something that isn't just a band playing in a room or a warehouse. I wanted to take methods from the past like claymation and the use of green screens and put them into the video. So a friend (Josh Nordyke) and I made claymation figures and then I also made a robot puppet. Our guitar player Bobby and I animated the figures against a green screen and then I started dropping them into the city footage. I filmed the robot puppet against a green screen and dropped the band members' faces all pixelated onto the robot. My friend, another photographer, Sierra Emery, and I filmed the band members against a green screen for the rest. Then hours and hours of color matching, enhancing, compositing, rendering and editing later, the video was done. I went to back it up on a hard drive and the file deleted itself. The older back up also magically deleted itself off the hard drive, too. So hours and hours of editing it again produced the video you see today for 'It's All In The Reflexes.'"

What was it like working with guest musicians like Timbre?
"Working with Timbre is always fun. She is a way better musician then the rest of us. She was actually on our last album, *Plastic Revolution*, too. Instead of playing harp, we made her yell in our gang vocals. If Timbre ever loses her voice in the future, it's probably our fault."

Why is the visual important to your art?
"The visual side of us is extremely important. I have been drawing and making characters since I was a little kid. To just make music isn't enough of an outlet for me. I need to be able to add designs, color and drawings to it. It's really more of one big piece of art to me. Not just making some songs and hoping people like it."

What is the inspiration behind the robots, animals, other props used in your live presentation?
"The inspiration behind the robots, animals and other cardboard characters we've made actually came out of necessity. When we were first going out on the road, we decided to go to Cornerstone Fest and try to get on some generator stages. We only had enough money to buy day passes. So, once we got in we decided we needed to get the word out about us as fast as possible. So I built a robot out of cardboard, slapped a boombox with our music in its stomach and sent him out to advertise our show. We also let people throw tennis balls at us for money. We were able to raise the rest of the money we needed to stay from that, but more people came to that little tennis ball event than our shows. The crowd for that actually got so big that it spilled out into the road and Cornerstone had to shut it down," Dave stops and laughs at the memory.

"It wasn't really meant to be a permanent thing, it just worked well so we kept doing it. A couple years ago we weren't going to do it anymore, we realized it was turning into an 'I need attention' type thing and we were tired of all the bands saying 'look at me, look at me!' We were worried that Cornerstone was turning into an advertising fest for bands and didn't want to be a part of it. The absence of the robot made a lot of people sad, though, so we weighed the options and decided that it was fun for a lot of people and we shouldn't care too much about how it looks, and just let people have their fun. So the robot made a comeback."

How did the band get started? Also, take us through each major stage of the band as well as each release. Cover any highlights or low-lights.
"The band has actually had three starts and it's been an adventure. The first start was in late 2004 as an experimental punk band. That lasted a year and then disbanded. I started the band over using the same name and added in more elements. I started experimenting with a lot of melodic tapping on the guitars and heavier hitting parts. We put out an EP called *Some Sort of War* and that took our crowds locally from 30 people to 200 people. So we followed up immediately with a longer EP called *Kamikaze Romantic Thoughts*. On that album I started experimenting with adding dancy parts and lots of synths. It extended our popularity from just a Michigan band to more of a regional band. We were pulling good crowds in the midwest and south. At that point it seemed like we were about to take off and become something bigger, it was exciting. Then a dark cloud fell over us.

"People were getting really burnt out, people were falling away and we were starting to lose members. I didn't like attention on me too much, so I actually sang from the side of the stage and made our bass

BY DOUG VAN PELT

"We decided that it was fun for a lot of people and we shouldn't care too much about how it looks, and just let people have their fun. So the robot made a comeback."

player stand in the middle. He quit after that album and everyone thought the 'singer' had quit, which circulated rumors that we had broken up. The consensus was that The Skies Revolt was dead. In the low though, I was writing a rock album. I was really inspired by Brand New's album *The Devil and God Are Raging Inside Me*. It made me really want to write some rock songs. So we recorded our first full-length in 2008, *The Skies Revolt Is Alive and Well*. I and a friend Josh Nordyke actually illustrated a comic to go along with the album featuring zombies and robots. We did it in such a way that each song had a page and the captions to the comic were actually the lyrics to each song. This album gave us a lot of hope and we quickly sold out of them but that dark cloud wasn't done with us. I got tired, really tired, the road had taken most things away from me and I was ready to quit. On the way to Cornerstone Fest that year I secretly told God, 'If you want me to keep doing this I need a clear sign.' That year at Cornerstone a bunch of random people came up to me saying, 'Keep doing it,' which seemed pretty clear to me, seeing I hadn't told anyone what was going on in my head and that hadn't happened before. I also was befriended by Chad Johnson who was currently the head of Solid State Records and then started Come & Live. He gave me a lot of support and direction from there.

"Our drummer quickly followed suit and quit to take a good job in California. We picked up a new drummer, Jarred Irby, but rumors of us not existing anymore kept persisting. Our new drummer Jarred quit to finish school and our guitar player Nate, the only long-lasting member besides me also quit. Then with replacements, on our way back from a festival in South Dakota, our beloved vegetable oil-powered RV/swat team-ish vehicle thing died on the border of Iowa and Illinois. After 10 hours on the side of I-80 and no mechanics wanting to come help us on Labor Day, our vehicle was towed away to never run again. We came home in defeat and weren't seen for a while.

"This marked the beginning of the third start. With Rusty Vining (bass) and Nate Smith (drums) now permanent members, we went to Nashville and made *Plastic Revolution*. It was back to basics, starting fresh as a three-piece. Kept it simple and toured hard for a year on it, building back up a lot of our crowd. It was really a transitional album if anything. Getting the new guys used to the life. After that we added in Bobby Dowell on guitar from Kentucky and were back up to a four-piece. Did some more hard touring and built up a lot of new crowd and friends. Jarred our drummer that had quit for college, now done with college, has also come back to play third guitar. Spirits are high again and we are ready to keep hitting it hard."

Going back to the new album, what are some things on your heart that you touched on with this? Why are these things important?
Encouragement and renewing. You can't bring the past back but you can build something new. *Plastic Revolution* was more of an angry album. Lots of pointing out of what I thought was wrong out there. It can't end at that, though. Correction is important, but there also needs to be encouragement. It's easy to say what's wrong, but it's hard to offer an answer. So this album is basically saying, 'Be strong, things are hard, but you need to stand up for what's right and keep fighting the good fight.'"

Anything else you'd like to add?
"We just got back from Philadelphia where we recorded a 7-inch produced by Josh and Justin from Motion City Soundtrack. We apparently caught their eye and they wanted to produce a 7-inch with us. They were really awesome to us and fun to work with. That is coming out this spring sometime with more new songs."

"Our lineup is me (David Prindle) on vocals, guitar and synth. Rusty Vining on bass and backup vocals. Nate Smith on drums and backup vocals. Bobby Dowell on guitar and backup vocals. Jarred Irby on guitar and back up vocals. Album artwork by David Prindle."

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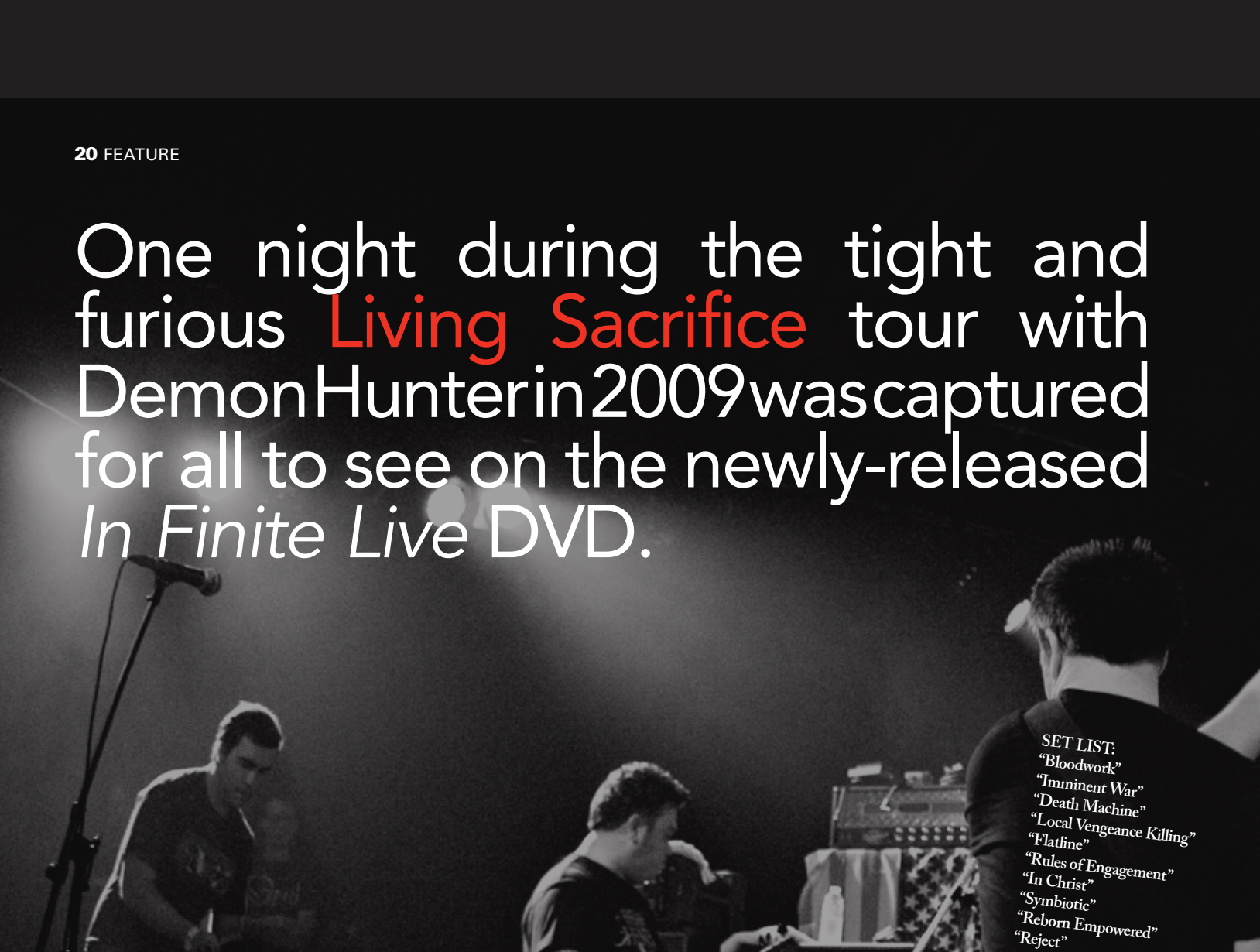
Photo by Sierre Emery. The Skies Revolt: David Prindle, Rusty Vining, Nate Smith, Bobby Dowell and Jarred Irby.

One night during the tight and furious Living Sacrifice tour with Demon Hunter in 2009 was captured for all to see on the newly-released *In Finite Live* DVD.



SET LIST:
"Bloodwork"
"Imminent War"
"Death Machine"
"Local Vengeance Killing"
"Flatline"
"Rules of Engagement"
"In Christ"
"Symbiotic"
"Reborn Empowered"
"Reject"

"(Since) we were opening for Demon Hunter in 2009," explains axe-wielding frontman Bruce Fitzhugh, "it was a shorter 10-song set." The DVD captures the entire show, with only a few breaks between songs edited out – truly a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) viewpoint. "These are songs that we have been playing for awhile on tour and part of the set from our tour with DH in 2008. One notable addition is 'Rules of Engagement.' At the time this show was shot, *The Infinite Order* had not been released, so this is actually the first time we played the song live. It is kind of rough even."

This was a DIY project that Fitzhugh put together himself, so any roughness criticism has to get past his scowl. "I pretty much produced the entire thing. I hired the video crew, hired the recording crew, got it mixed, edited and picked photos for the art work, got our Art Director at Zambooie to do the layout, etc. The label (Solid State) was fine with it all and liked it enough to include part of the show on our *Deluxe Edition of The Infinite Order* that is available on itunes and Amazon mp3."

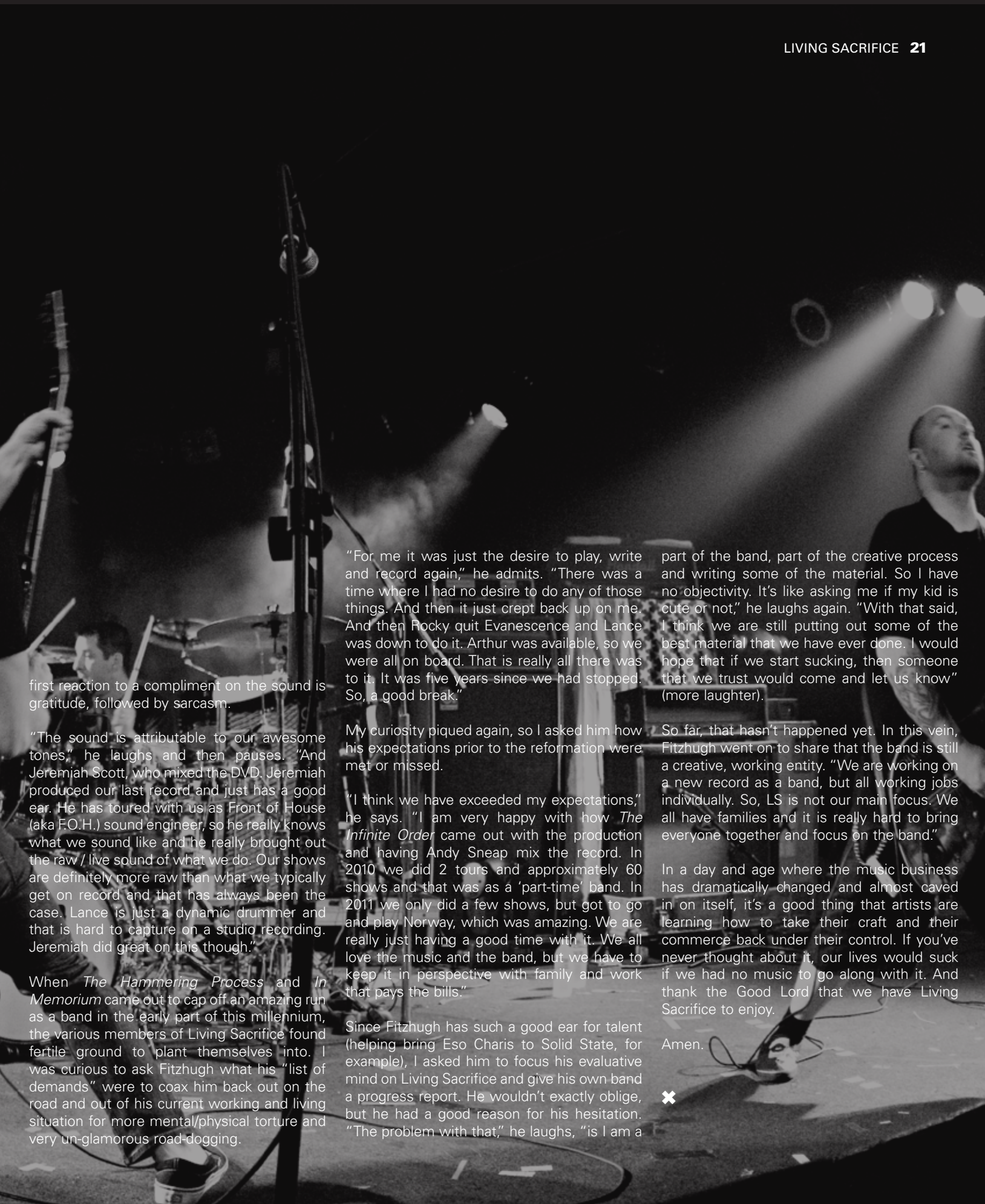
I asked Fitzhugh what other live music DVDs he and the band might've watched as a benchmark to try and live up to ... and he just laughed. "None really. We didn't have that kind of budget. It was really just an opportunity to film a show at a cool venue (the Glasshouse in Pomona, CA). And we had never taken on the task of recording ourselves live before."

Given the crisp tightness and musical precision displayed at a Living Sacrifice show, it's amazing that a live album was never tackled before. Afficionados of all things metal will likely appreciate the "no frills" nature of this disc. While not as statuesque as, say, Rush on stage, this band from Little Rock, AR, knows how to balance out acrobatic movement with the simple "watch this" display of power. Nevertheless, Fitzhugh did point out that a headlining performance would've added more eye candy. "(The visual is) pretty important," he states, "but again, we were direct support on this show, so the lights were not set up for us. We did get to use some, but they were Demon Hunter's setup. As far as live (shows) go, we strive to perform our music as energetic as possible, but we are not a band that is going to flail around and act like idiots not playing our instruments. The music comes first, we just want it to be intense." This priority comes through loud and clear and, thankfully, the band's goal of intensity is met – and then some.

There's lots of tight close-ups of the band in this footage, so I asked him if the cameras got in the way. "The cameras were not too bad," he demures. "I did not notice them or think about them. I am glad they were so close-up, though. It gave a good perspective of being on stage right next to the action."

Besides the black and white aesthetics that fans have come to expect ever since the *Reborn* album, the first thing most anyone will notice about *In Finite Live* is the impeccable and awesome sound they captured for this recording. It punches in all the right places. If you've ever tried to record something live (like part of a song on your cellphone at a show, for example), you've realized that good microphones are needed and that the beefy low end heard at a live show doesn't easily translate unless it's done right. Fitzhugh's

BY DOUG VAN PELT



first reaction to a compliment on the sound is gratitude, followed by sarcasm.

"The sound is attributable to our awesome tones," he laughs and then pauses. "And Jeremiah Scott, who mixed the DVD. Jeremiah produced our last record and just has a good ear. He has toured with us as Front of House (aka F.O.H.) sound engineer, so he really knows what we sound like and he really brought out the raw / live sound of what we do. Our shows are definitely more raw than what we typically get on record and that has always been the case. Lance is just a dynamic drummer and that is hard to capture on a studio recording. Jeremiah did great on this though."

When *The Hammering Process* and *In Memorium* came out to cap off an amazing run as a band in the early part of this millennium, the various members of Living Sacrifice found fertile ground to plant themselves into. I was curious to ask Fitzhugh what his "list of demands" were to coax him back out on the road and out of his current working and living situation for more mental/physical torture and very un-glamorous road-dogging.

"For me it was just the desire to play, write and record again," he admits. "There was a time where I had no desire to do any of those things. And then it just crept back up on me. And then Rocky quit Evanescence and Lance was down to do it. Arthur was available, so we were all on board. That is really all there was to it. It was five years since we had stopped. So, a good break."

My curiosity piqued again, so I asked him how his expectations prior to the reformation were met or missed.

"I think we have exceeded my expectations," he says. "I am very happy with how *The Infinite Order* came out with the production and having Andy Sneap mix the record. In 2010 we did 2 tours and approximately 60 shows and that was as a 'part-time' band. In 2011 we only did a few shows, but got to go and play Norway, which was amazing. We are really just having a good time with it. We all love the music and the band, but we have to keep it in perspective with family and work that pays the bills."

Since Fitzhugh has such a good ear for talent (helping bring Eso Charis to Solid State, for example), I asked him to focus his evaluative mind on Living Sacrifice and give his own band a progress report. He wouldn't exactly oblige, but he had a good reason for his hesitation. "The problem with that," he laughs, "is I am a part of the band, part of the creative process and writing some of the material. So I have no objectivity. It's like asking me if my kid is cute or not," he laughs again. "With that said, I think we are still putting out some of the best material that we have ever done. I would hope that if we start sucking, then someone that we trust would come and let us know" (more laughter).

So far, that hasn't happened yet. In this vein, Fitzhugh went on to share that the band is still a creative, working entity. "We are working on a new record as a band, but all working jobs individually. So, LS is not our main focus. We all have families and it is really hard to bring everyone together and focus on the band."

In a day and age where the music business has dramatically changed and almost caved in on itself, it's a good thing that artists are learning how to take their craft and their commerce back under their control. If you've never thought about it, our lives would suck if we had no music to go along with it. And thank the Good Lord that we have Living Sacrifice to enjoy.

Amen.

✖

Even though I've finally published my novel about time travel & high school football (*Desert High*), I still can't help but fantasize about the lore of travelling back in time to alter the past and its impact on the present. That being said, I really couldn't resist throwing this fantasy scenerio at Dallas Taylor of the stuck-in-time Southern dirt metal band Maylene & the Sons of Disaster.

I made him patiently listen to me tell the story that set up the question I had for him and his band after a one-of-a-kind concert experience. No gentle build-up, no winks or tips of my hat to signal that I was treading into the land of fiction. Nope, this story had to be told as if it was a matter of public record.

Okay, this is a true story. You were riding in your van from Jacksonville, FL, to a show in Tallahassee when what appeared to be lightning struck a tree right next to the road... I'm sure you remember this. And it lit up the sky and the road all around your van. No one was electrocuted – maybe your guitarist was, but he didn't say he was hurt – but it certainly freaked everyone in the van out. No gear or anything was harmed.

However, when you got to the venue, the marquee said: TONIGHT: LYNYRD SKYNYRD, THE OUTLAWS, ALLMAN BROS, MAYLENE & THE SONS OF DISASTER. You thought it was a joke, but then all the muscle cars, beaters and old stations wagons in the small parking lot were definitely "period" cars and you wondered if this was an elaborate video shoot for one of the opening bands on this bill, which you were headlining (as far as *your* itinerary was concerned). When you got inside everyone was either in Levi's denim shirts or t-shirts and jeans, most all the guys had super long hair and the jeans were bell bottoms. Right before you go on, you see Ronnie Van Zandt go into the green room – THE Ronnie Van Zandt! You see a Raiders/Steelers game on the tv and Don Meredith and Howard Cosell are in those yellow *MNF* jackets. It dawns on you (that) you have actually travelled back in time. Must've been that lightning flash. Anyway, you go on and do your job, playing your Maylene set...

What happened next? How does the audience respond to your sound? It has Southern Rock influences, but it's certainly different than these classic and legendary bands. What does the audience think? How does that make you guys feel? What do the other bands tell you afterwards? What sort of impact does your "glimpse of the future" musical sound have on the 1976 Southern Rock scene? Tell us...

"I think I'd probably be taken back a little bit and freaked out. They'd probably wonder what we were singing. They probably thought our guitars were broken or the amps – why there was crazy, heavy distortion coming out of it. And probably the microphone was broken. They'd probably wonder what was coming out and sounding way different than the other bands. Maybe they would be open to it, but probably in that era they'd think we were crazy.

"It can be very difficult and very draining sometimes when the audience just sits there and stares at you like something's wrong with you, which does happen. The audience just simply stares and wonders what's going on. It's crazy, because usually when we think the audience doesn't... 'Man! They didn't get into it.' Maybe we played a bad set or we're just thinking that and then people will come up and say, 'You guys were amazing! What an awesome show, tonight!' So, over the years, I realized that. But when I first started playing music, I thought when you played a good show, people went crazy or were just jumping everywhere. And nowadays, people can have a good time and enjoy it even if they're just standing still sometimes. Now I don't try to look into it and try to relate everything to my past and the way that I would act at a show growing up."

(I wouldn't let it go, so I asked Taylor another question.)
What did (Lynyrd Skynyrd guitarist) Stevie Gaines and some of the other guys in the other bands tell you after the show?
"Probably they would say that they respected us for the energy and the heart that we put into our music. They'd probably wonder where we were from. They'd wonder if we were super, super backwoods and that's why we played the crazy stuff we do," Taylor laughs.

What sort of impact does your glimpse of the future musical sound have on the 1976 Southern Rock scene?
I guess it would open their eyes to make things different – a genre they've never heard of and mixing it in with Country and Classic Rock and Southern Rock. Maybe they would see something that hadn't been done yet."

So, what do you think music sounds like *now* as a result of this information getting out back *then*?
Uh, if it gets out back then? I don't know. Probably the worst-case. I think that's when music was ... some of the greatest for me – (the) influences that came out then. I think music nowadays, I don't get a lot of it... So, hopefully, my music or even other music doesn't ever reach them and change the music of those times."

After we're done exploring time travel, we ask about the *IV* album, which looks like an old vinyl release from the mid-'70s. It's a refined Maylene album and it's excellent. Taylor and his bandmates seem pleased with it. Taylor goes on to consider his favorites.

"I like 'Drought of '85' a lot. It's about (how) I guess a lot of times in life we believe or we do things or live a certain life because it's kind of routine or what we're told or it's what we're used to. That song is pretty much about, 'If your world fell apart or everything you knew was the opposite of what you thought it was, would you still believe in what you believe in? Would you still believe in love? Would you still believe in God?' It asks that question: 'Do you believe what you believe because you really believe it? Or do you believe it because it's convenient and it's the thing to do?' I like the song a lot to challenge people to really take a step back and not take things, I guess, for granted. And realize how special, I guess to me, God and love and my relationship with Jesus... If you really believe that, you have to believe it in the hard times just as well as the good times. It's a good thing to question everything, so that they're making the choices for themselves and not because it's convenient or what they're told to."

Taylor doesn't just consider pain, either. He writes of what he's experienced and the last two years have seen him survive divorce and re-arrange his relationship with his child. "The song 'Taking on Water' means a lot to me. I went through a divorce and it's a real personal song, like a letter to my ex-wife, talking about missing the old times and what could have been, but will never be.

"I like 'Cat's Walk,' too. That song's fun to play live.

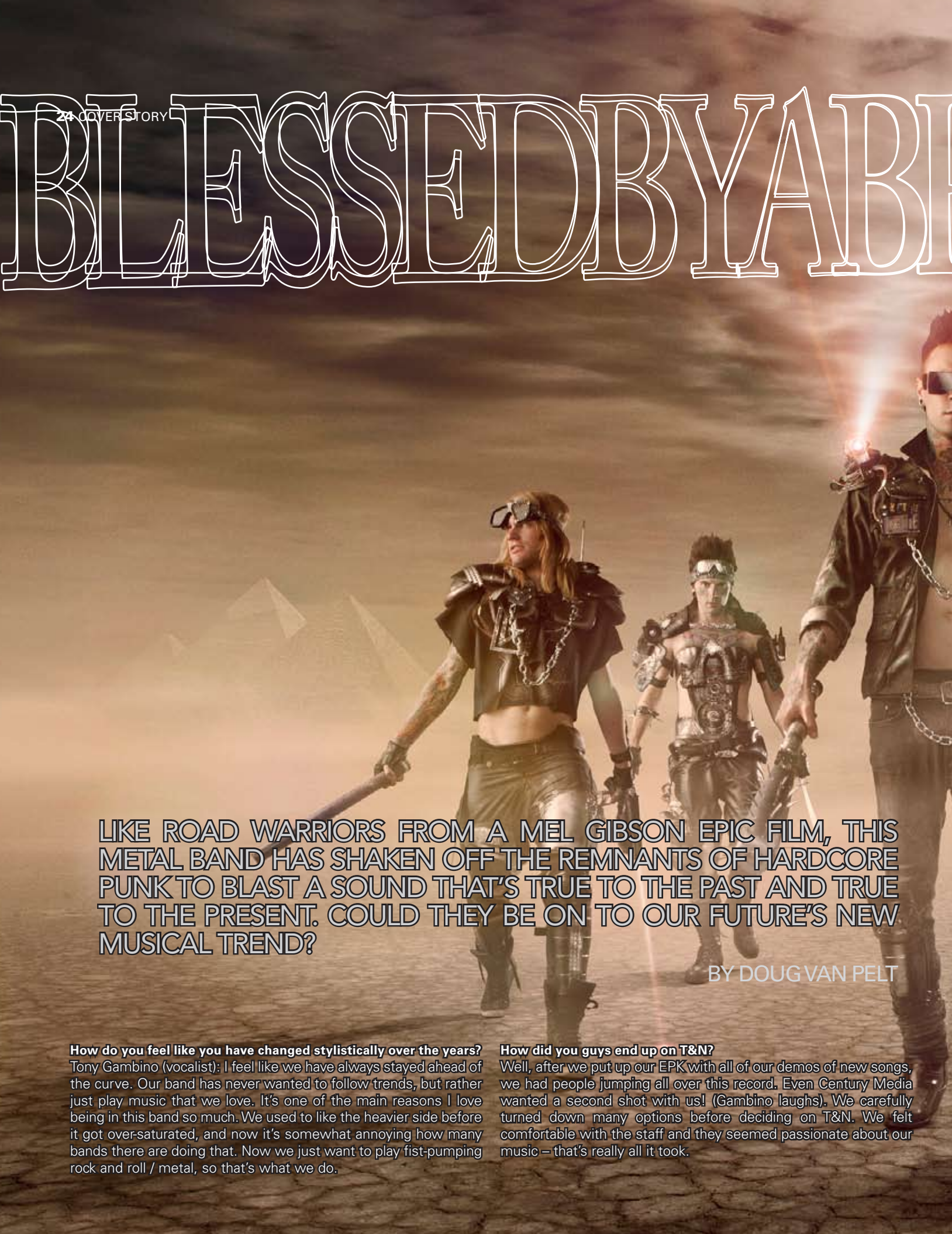
BY DOUG VAN PELT

The lyrics are kind of really messed up. It's based on a true story of my great aunt, who was raped and murdered and the guy that did it was the last guy to get lynched in the state of Florida. The song is taken, I guess, from his perspective, which is a really, kind of messed up perspective. He takes something that he wanted and couldn't have. In real life, he wanted to be with my great aunt and she didn't want to have anything to do with him and so he beat her head in with a hammer and buried her under a log. He was a black man and it was during *that* time and the KKK found out about it and they came down, broke him out of jail and tortured him. It's a really messed up story on both sides – all the way around. That song is a darker song, but it's based on a true story."

I guess Dallas Taylor knows that fact is more interesting than fiction.

✖

BLESSEDBYABE



LIKE ROAD WARRIORS FROM A MEL GIBSON EPIC FILM, THIS METAL BAND HAS SHAKEN OFF THE REMNANTS OF HARDCORE PUNK TO BLAST A SOUND THAT'S TRUE TO THE PAST AND TRUE TO THE PRESENT. COULD THEY BE ON TO OUR FUTURE'S NEW MUSICAL TREND?

BY DOUG VAN PELT

How do you feel like you have changed stylistically over the years?
Tony Gambino (vocalist): I feel like we have always stayed ahead of the curve. Our band has never wanted to follow trends, but rather just play music that we love. It's one of the main reasons I love being in this band so much. We used to like the heavier side before it got over-saturated, and now it's somewhat annoying how many bands there are doing that. Now we just want to play fist-pumping rock and roll / metal, so that's what we do.

How did you guys end up on T&N?
Well, after we put up our EPK with all of our demos of new songs, we had people jumping all over this record. Even Century Media wanted a second shot with us! (Gambino laughs). We carefully turned down many options before deciding on T&N. We felt comfortable with the staff and they seemed passionate about our music – that's really all it took.

ROKENHEART

Take us through the years that BBABH has been a band.

Well I guess I could tell the story from my perspective. Do you guys remember back in 2003 or 2004 when all we had was MySpace? Of course you do. Well, I remember browsing the music charts and seeing these outrageously dressed kids with crazy hair at the number one spot and thinking, "What the heck is this all about?" (laughter). I remember not liking most of the songs, but they had two in particular that I fell in love with. They were the demos for "Carry On" and "Side By Side." (I have the feeling that a lot of readers are relating with this, ha ha)

After a few years of listening to these guys on and off and me bouncing all around the country, living in Colorado, California, Oregon and even Alaska, a friend of mine emailed me, saying that Blessed By A Broken Heart were auditioning singers. I thought to myself, "There is no way they will even see my audition with how big these guys are." But I sent it anyway. I did some singing and screaming, but I think what sealed the deal was when I did a flip in the audition video.

Photo: Caleb Kuhl

"I think

They were interested, so I flew out to Montreal to meet the guys and have a face-to-face audition and it was on. I immediately moved to Montreal and the first thing we did was drive across North America to British Columbia in order to record Blessed's second album, *Pedal To The Metal*.

Immediately after that we co-headlined a tour with A Day To Remember with MyChildren MyBride as the opener. I remember falling in love with life on the road – making killer friends and playing music. It was something I'd wanted since I was seven years old. The toughest part of the ride has been being away from my family. I got married almost four years ago to a gorgeous girl from New Mexico that had a one-year-old little boy. They are the loves of my life and it's really tough to leave for months at a time. I honestly know the only way something like this can work out is if the hand of God is on it. So here we are. And now it's the start of 2012, *Feel The Power* is about to drop and I honestly believe this album can change the game for good. We really want to bring back feel-good music!

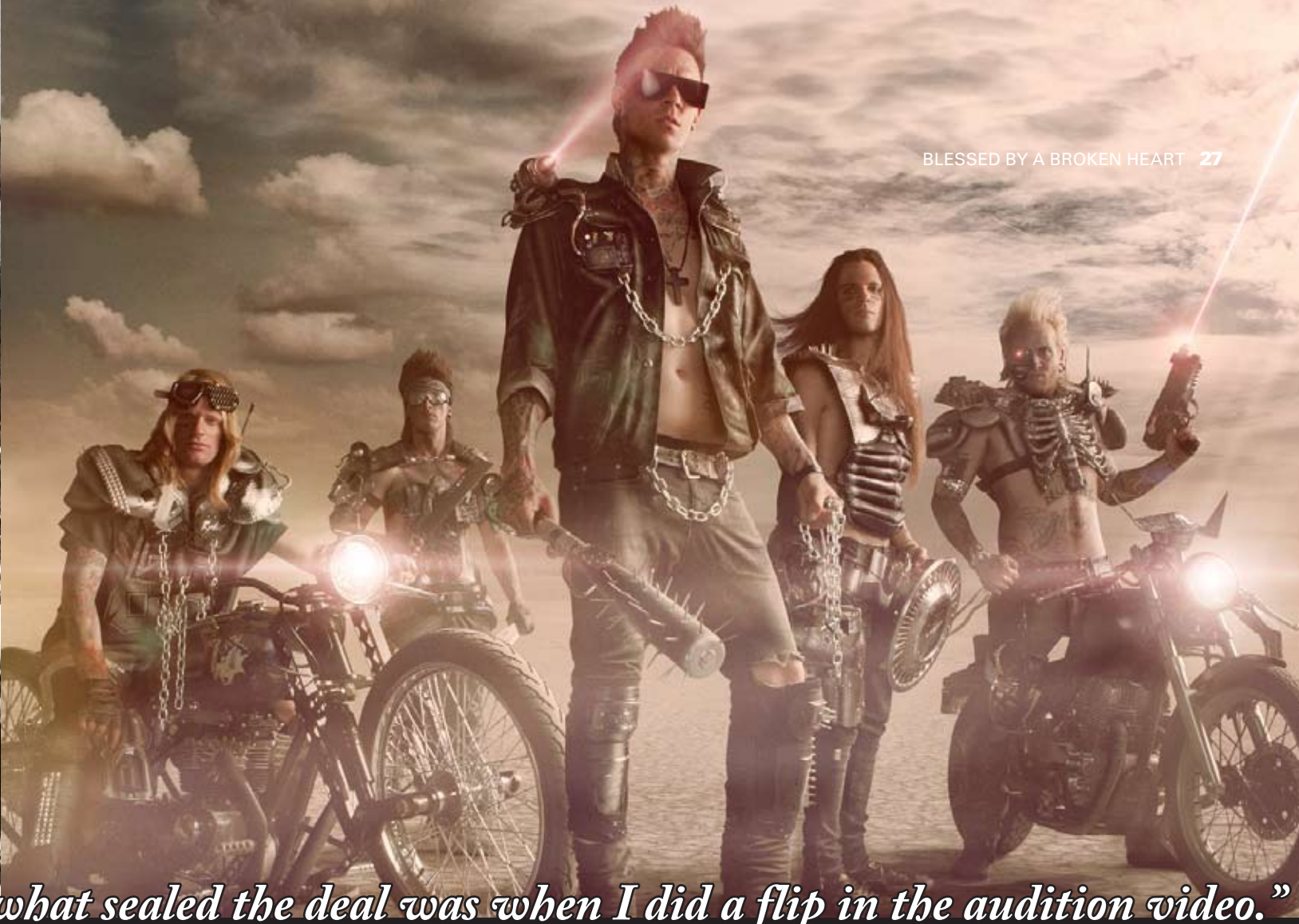
Tell us about the songs on *Feel the Power*.
I can say this, I really love the variety of styles on this album. From heavy metal to dirty rock and roll to a power ballad. I love that we don't feel like we have to fit some mold and that we can write songs how we want to write them. My favorite songs on the album are "Rockin All Night" and "I've Got You." These songs have allowed me to be able to put some serious feeling into the vocals, almost getting back to my gospel/r&b roots. You'll be able to hear it!

What does the phrase "Glam Metal" mean to you guys?
Not much really. We have sort of come out of that phase. It was fun dressing all goofy on stage for a while, but we have naturally matured as individuals. We really want to keep progressing as a band, so I don't want us to stick to one style forever. Don't get me wrong, we are still influenced by '80s music, but not just "glam metal" specifically.

What about '80s metal appeals to you guys the most? Why?
I would say the sheer musicianship of bands in the '80s is absolutely amazing! You don't see that anymore. I truly don't mean to be prideful, but one thing you will find when you compare Blessed to most bands now-a-days is that we slay them musically. I think that has to do with being influenced by real musicians. I mean really, I could write and record an entire hardcore album in 24 hours. There is a reason this album took 3 years...

What does Jesus Christ mean to you? What do you think about His claims to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me?"
He means everything to me. I mean, for Him to go through all that He did just for me? And for us as individuals? That sort of love, it's real. If you take the time to open your heart to it, you can feel it, and it will change your entire outlook on life. When it comes down to it, no one is perfect and no one will ever be perfect, but God's love for us is unconditional. It's a pretty rad thought.

How has the focus of the band changed over time in terms of spirituality, lyrics, band goals, etc?
Spiritually, I don't think we really have changed. I think we have always had the same mindset about it – write good music that



what sealed the deal was when I did a flip in the audition video."

appeals to everyone and that is positive and let your life speak for itself. As far as the lyrics are concerned, we have taken a new direction, for sure. The last album was all goofy tongue-in-cheek sort of lyrics. This time around the content is a bit more serious and about real-life topics.

Band goals? I'd say our biggest goal is just to be heard. I mean, our music speaks for itself. It just needs to be heard. We'd like to play some countries that we haven't yet – places like South America, South Africa and New Zealand.

I hate asking this question, but what does the name Blessed By A Broken Heart symbolize and mean for you guys?
Really, I think they used some band name generator website. (laughter) No. That's actually a question for Tyler. Basically, he started this band after a terrible heartbreak. But we all agree that it is the worst band name in history. We have tried to legally change it to BLESSED. But it can't happen. So we are stuck...

What have tours like *Scream the Prayer* and other tours with Christian metal/hardcore bands meant for you guys? How did this kind of touring impact you?
We have toured with some awesome Christian bands, people like Sleeping Giant, who all have hearts of gold and a real care for people. We have also toured with Christian bands who are really judgmental, people who preach: "turn to Jesus or go to hell," which I don't agree with at all. But this is how life is – you can be surrounded by people from all walks of life, but you don't have to let the negative effect you. While touring I try to surround myself with good, positive people, Christian or not.

How do you feel about some styles in rock going in and out of fashion? How do you feel about '80s metal getting ignored or labelled "uncool" by a generation not too long ago? I can recall in the late '90s when "metal" itself became a bad word. In fact, we changed the name of this magazine ... whole record companies, radio stations, retail stores and other parts of the industry did away with metal divisions.
Ha ha. That's funny to think about. I think we can all agree that Nirvana ruined that for everyone, but hey, that's what got us where we all are today. So let's enjoy the ride. There will always be a "trendy" side to music, you can't avoid that. And as annoying as it is, we deal with it and we keep doing what we love.

How important is the visual part of your band? What are your thoughts behind the desert and *Road Warrior* vibe in the main press shot?
The photographer we hired, Caleb Kuhl, did an amazing job with our photos. So stoked we hired him. The visual part of the band has always been important. And I think we can all see that it does not, in any way, take away from the music side of Blessed. But I believe a show should be a show. Not just music. Ever been to a boring concert? Ever been to a Blessed Show? It's about in-your-face music, smoke, lasers and cool clothes – we bring it all. After nearly every show we play, I hear someone say, "That was the most amazing show I have ever seen." And that's how it should be – we want to keep upping our game and we won't *ever* stop bringing the party!

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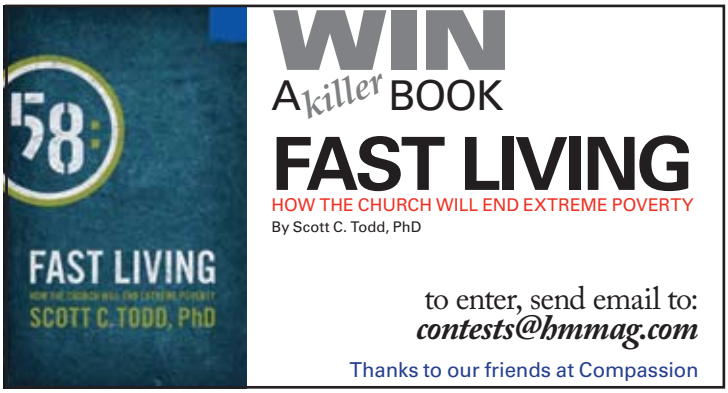

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CLASSIC BACK ISSUES – PROOF THAT PRINT LIVES ON – $4 each

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What **Cradle of Filth** Says

AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO THE FUTURE OF ROCK AND METAL, WE THOUGHT WE GLANCE BACK AT ONE OF THE CLASSIC INTERVIEWS FROM THE PAGES OF HM (AND THE SOON-TO-BE-RELEASED *ROCK STARS ON GOD, VOLUME 2* BOOK ON HM PRESS).

WE THINK THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST "SO & SO SEZ" FEATURES WE'VE EVER RUN, BECAUSE IT NOT ONLY COVERED A CONTROVERSIAL BAND, BUT THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN VOCALIST DANI AND EDITOR DOUG VAN PELT WENT BENEATH THE SURFACE, AS YOU'LL SEE NEAR THE END. IT'S ALSO ONE OF OUR MOST DELICATE, AS THE NATURE OF THE FIRST TOPIC OF CONVERSATION WAS PRETTY SMUTTY. READ ON, BUT TAKE THE "PARENTAL ADVISORY" WARNING TO HEART. WE WANT TO SHOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, BUT ALSO WANT TO WARN THE READER IN ADVANCE.

I read the story in Kerrang! about what's been stirring in England a little bit. But in your own words, tell me the story of your T-shirt court case controversy in England.

I can't really give you a viewpoint on it, because it didn't actually happen to me, but we have some quite graphic artwork, and this was quite an old shirt, from like four years ago – but the shirt depicts a masturbating nun, like a photo of a nun masturbating, and the back of it reads, "Jesus is a (bleep)." (Editor's note: an uncommon profane word for a part of the female anatomy, which starts with the letter "c")

And I've got some details here . . . last year, I think, toward the beginning of the summer, the person in question, who is a fan of the band, was returning from a night club, where he was stopped and arrested for wearing the T-shirt. Basically, it looked like, at one point, he'd get a short jail sentence. And basically, he was charged, but the police took the shirt off and they threw him out on the street, after leaving him without a shirt, not even making him wear it inside out, or what have you. And he argued in his defense that he was just attending a rock concert. And he showed up at the court wearing a suit, and said, "I was attending a certain brand of rock concert, and so I was wearing relating material." The interesting point was that they weren't gonna let this go, for some reason, because it was in quite a prolific court in London, a quite snotty (bleep), as it were. And they dragged out a police act from 1839, especially for the case, and it was like, for blasphemy; profane, obscene and indecent things – anything they could find to win, which they did. He lost his case. He tried to appeal, but he lost the appeal, lost his legal aid. It was important. It was publicized a lot. The repercussions of this could've been enormous, for example, if they're allowed to do that, the music business, any artist, the film business . . . and censorship in Britain is bad as it is, without having to deal with this kind of stuff. So this was all over the press. So that guy was basically charged and fined, and basically, the band decided to pay the fine. Basically, the record company asked us to do it. In other words, we felt obliged to do it, because it was our design. We pledged to support him and turn up and stand in his defense, but at the time they rescheduled his court appearance, we were on tour.

That's an interesting story. What do you think about the role of . . . do you think there should be any sort of censorship, like if someone prints up a bunch of T-shirts that say "Die Nigger Die," or something (horrible) like that?

It's a very fine line, isn't it, because . . . I think so, yeah, because that kind of thing, I personally, am not the least bit impressed with. That's a racial attack, and the repercussions of that are deadly anyway. That's real. As far as I'm concerned, with the "Jesus is a (bleep)" thing, you're talking about spirituality, and not a physical entity. So, yeah, we draw the line. We could put anything on the shirt, and get as disgusting as we want, but that happened to be what was on our shirt. We've got a shirt coming out that says, "Big girls don't say no," and then you see the artwork, and you realize that it's a woman in the context of being almost undead, and it's like an S&M thing throughout the . . . do you understand what I mean?

Yeah.

So we know when to draw the line, but I know there are millions of ardent Christians who would look at that and say, "That's disgusting."

What are your views on the Catholic church?

I tend to not get too wrapped up in any kind of religious debate, really. It's not that I'm ignorant, I just choose not to get involved. It's not really my thing. I actually live next to a church, and lot of people imagine that we would be like Deicide, or a band like that, who would blatantly attack the church, but Jesus has become, in relation to that, it's dumb, because the term "Jesus" just applies to the provision of millions of people. Yeah, I can actually imagine a person like that, the guy totally existed. So, we're not really interested in that. One thing I thought about Catholics, is they believe you go to Hell or you go to Heaven. There doesn't seem to be that much in between . . . and the concept of Hellfire, but where do you draw the line there, know what I mean? Think about it like this: "Okay, you've done an equal amount of sinning in your life, and an equal amount of acts that are termed by the

heavenly host – the seraphim, or whatever – as being morally good and worthy of entrance into Heaven. But it so happens that you stole a cookie and tipped the balance, and then what? You're into eternal damnation, burning in Hell, even though it was like a stalemate other than the cookie." Do you see the point of that?

That's an interesting point. What do you think about the facts and the scientific look at things like the resurrection? There were 500 witnesses that saw a resurrected Christ, and if that was just a big lie or a hoax, there would be tons of people that would . . . like, if that happened today, and I said I was Christ, and I made a big stink about it, David Jennings, and all these people on the news would get on there and say, "Doug Van Pelt pulled off a hoax today, acting like he was Christ," there would definitely be conflicting reports. And there's not really a great deal of conflicting reports about Christ's resurrection. In fact, there's evidence that, like, 500 people saw it, and stuff like that. And the fact that the stone that was rolled away, it takes several men to roll it away, and they had, like, a bunch of Roman soldiers guarding the stone in the first place...

I think that the trappings of that are symbolism. Actually, yeah, it's interesting stuff. At a younger age, I was . . . my family were church people and I learned a lot about the Bible. I like the Bible, especially the Old Testament, because it's got kind of a darker nature. I find it interesting, how it correlates with all the religions, and the resurrection, the definition of communion, etc., and enlightened spirituality. There are stories that can be some point of origin. And there are things that I'm sure can't possibly be true. I'm sure there were thousands of other things . . . like the devil coming into the serpent, and that you cannot have light without dark, I mean, some people argue those points anyway, that if it was really dark, it came down to two days. A fallen angel could get tossed out of Heaven because, I don't know, what other reason? Do we talk about it for the wrong reasons? If it was actually Michael, the archangel that . . . if somebody could prove . . . it would be quite interesting.

There are some interesting points, like judgment...
The best thing I can explain to you about our band, apart from that one shirt, apart from being irreligious and blasphemous, we're not about church, and "Christ should be killed," I think our band has more in common with the kind of imagery of the plight of, like, a dark angel. He has a purpose. There's a need for people like that. There's a need for types like that, and forces of darkness, and what have you, because without them, there would be no opposites, and there would be no in-between. And I think that's the kind of imagery that plays an ideology. And that's...

I can understand how that would have some appeal to it, but what about the negative aspects of that kind of lifestyle – the dark side embraces hatred, mistrust, violence...?
That's the moral majority opinion once again. I've had various interviews where people have said to me, "Oh, you must be the most miserable, negative person," and that's wrong, completely wrong. I'm probably the most ardent, passionate person I know, because I like this kind of thing. And I'm not talking about . . . you know, because I know where to draw the line. I could say that to me, it has a real numbness to it, and I think that, you know, it's opinion. If the roles were reversed, like I said. If the majority came down to one person, then he would be the freak, wouldn't he? And he would be the one wrong, and he would be the negative. I think it's exactly how you perceive it, and a lot of people can fit in the majority. There are a number of ways. My version is what I term is panic, or a statement; is adversity, rebellion, and evil – purely in that morality, everything that is out of society, that dictates what's right and what's wrong. Like, I mean, nature. How would you describe nature? If nature was a force or a person, would you say that was evil or good? Because it destroys at will. And like, with a cat, toying with a mouse, and killing it, that's natural evil, surely. Or, uh . . . do you know what I'm trying to get at?

Yeah. I think so.
I think that it all comes down to definition anyway. Because there's a Bible, and there's mention of the devil. There has to be a satanic Bible, and the conflict between the two sides just makes the conflict . . . I mean, there's little ground for atheists, and whatnot.

I'm sure you know that pure Satanism isn't so much anti-Bible, as much as it is "Do what you want to do." You know, "Do what thou wilt is the whole of the law" is the big quote from the Satanic Bible. And the problem I see with that is if...
Crowley.

Yeah. That's right. And if you know where to draw the line . . . If you do what you want to do, but you know where to draw the line, and that makes you coexist, then I respect the fact that you draw the line. But who are you to say that I can't draw my own line, and my line is that I obliterate everybody who has a funny accent with a gun. And you could get a lot of people on your side to say I'm an idiot, but if that was how I really felt, you couldn't morally say I was wrong, if you don't have any moral absolutes.
That's a very good point of the dichotomy of an individual, isn't it? How are you relating it to what . . . ?

Kind of what you were saying about the dark side. Sure, I spelled out the extremes of the dark side, or evil, and you brought up the point that, you know, "How can you really define it as evil, because the dark side is not just that one...?"
The evil that the Catholic faith, and the fight between the Protestants and Catholics. Fighting over scraps from a government table. And religion has caused more deaths through war than anything else. And live . . . I come from a place in England where, even now, like 400 years on, they're still everywhere, scattered remnants of the inquisition. I actually live in a house where the Witchfinder General stayed for a night. I mean, that kind of thing, you can still feel that kind of aura, I mean, that was done in God's Name, just the same as good things are done in God's Name. And people should not think me cruel, because, you know, they hear . . . people were born with desire to do certain things, to procreate, and Catholicism denies certain things. You know, it denies – I might be wrong, but it denies contraception, for example. I'll show you a Catholic family – an enormous family, 10 members. I'm sure they feel they should not use contraception, because God doesn't want them to. But then again, to walk around naked, before clothes were invented, I'm sure that was heresy as well.

I guess a point that I see as different, is the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, aren't fickle, but people's interpretation of it can be. There's definitely, I mean, if you look at the Bible at face value, you don't really see God changing His mind about things.
Umm, you do . . . in a kind of way. You've got the Old Testament and the New Testament, and the division between the two. Think of that, the destruction of the cities Sodom and Gomorrah. Okay, they were infested with evil, but surely that won't relate to . . . I mean, I can understand maybe with London or New York, ridden with what? Muggings and drugs, sex shows, you know what I mean. And if God would see the sexual sins of New York and destroyed the city, that would be a God of vengeance. But people have met His Son, Jesus. And that's almost a completely different character. You know, the Jews escaped from the Pharaoh, and He sent the angel of death down to do His dirty work by killing every . . . you know, people. That's a waste, in effect, killing people at random, just because he refused to let His children leave. He could've appeared Himself, or sent an angel down to say, "Here's the situation. Look, I'm an angel. If I have to use power I will. Now set these people free or I'll kill the Pharaoh," . . . instead of going and killing all those people.

"I like the Bible, especially the Old Testament, because it's got kind of a darker nature."

There's definitely the point you can bring up that show apparent contradictions, but . . . I personally, I think I could live my whole life without the New Testament, because the New testament is hidden all over the Old Testament, like Abraham offering up his only son, Isaac, is like a type of picture of Christ, God's Son.
Are you saying that you are Christian anyway?

Yeah.
Well, I haven't got a problem with that. I just wondered why you were caring about the questions about religious dogma, and religious factions. I don't know what you think . . . I mean, I take it you have a copy of the record?

Yes.
Now, if you read the lyrics, how would you say that . . . would you say that they were fundamentally Satanic? Do you enjoy things like horror films? Do you see them as blasphemous or irreligious?

Well, I'm not a big fan of them, because I think they touch a side of us that kind of . . . I think if I'm around you, and you're in a good mood, but I'm just completely negative,

my attitudes are gonna rub off on you, unless you find a way to get away from me. In the same way, I kind of feel like the horror movies, they kind of fascinate a morbid side of us...

Yeah, I would totally agree with you. But wouldn't it be a lot better to indulge in that kind of morbidity, purely by a visual aspect? Let me put this in another concept. I mean, you could say I'm just taking little faults in that, but I'm only defending myself, personally. It's a rule in Taoism, which, I don't know if you're familiar with that kind of . . . it's kind of a thing you term as Satanic, but it has more to do with pure logic; theology really. Aleister Crowley was quite into it, and was part of a group – I mean, it's almost religious in context. But one of their kind of stipulations, or it was not a rule, but it was merely a guideline, was that if you deny anything, it will come back to haunt you in various ways. And you've got a Catholic priest, as another example, because you know, I've never really known much about Catholicism. But in England, the Church of England was very, there was a lot of controversy. The last couple of years, there's been something like, I mean, it's a lot. It's not small things. Like, 20 to 30 priests have been arrested and charged, or come forth, or have been found out, because they've abused children in their care. Now, I think that happened because their religion denies them their sexuality. Everybody was born with the power to procreate, and yeah, okay. You could argue that you could get (bleep) and do it with no passion. You know, a quick (bleep) and there's the baby. But they deny themselves that, and I think that the more and more they start thinking about it, and thinking dirty thoughts, they imagine that the devil was speaking to them, trying to tempt them. But they're natural, their own mind craves it. How could they – themselves – be to blame with all the cause of it? How could they find themselves in the wrong? There must be another force, so they figure it must be devils. It's just the truth, like, 20 to 30 in the last two years. And because of it, the Church of England has lost so much respect. It means nothing now. I mean, it's just such a powerful force. You know, owned land, piles of money, and everything, but nowadays it's nothing. And in England, religion in that context has died. And there's nothing wrong with faith. It's just some people . . . I mean, if I am allowed to just, if people leave me alone, and I leave other people alone, that's the kind of message. I am not a fan of the Satanic Bible, because I think it's probably just as bad as organized religion. That's what it's become now. And it professes to be evil, which I think is a very armchair statement anyway. People are paying big bucks just to wear symbolism, because it's rebellion.

I think in one respect, it's fascinating that it angers people – even the common man, who would not even claim to have any belief in the Bible, is angered by the fact that a priest is doing this to kids. I think it's completely foul and evil, sure, for that to happen, but my explanation as to why some people have done that is . . . I don't think it's because they've denied themselves, but I come at it from a whole different viewpoint, as far as denying sin, or denying my flesh. I think that Jesus taught that in your own self, or in your own good works, you cannot do enough good, or you don't have enough strength inside you to never commit sin. And so you need to be born again. You need to be recreated, you need to become like Jesus, where you're doing the will of God, because God lives inside you. But that is a much more powerful way to avoid sin than trying to resist it. If you're resisting sin all the time, then sure, you're gonna crack somewhere, and you're gonna break, because you're not made to resist sin. But I don't fall in the camp of, "Okay, don't resist it, just indulge in it."

It turns out, yeah, that was another point . . . you can continue and finish what you were going to say first.

Okay. Just that I believe that Christ teaches about a new life, a life that's abundant, where God lives inside of you, and you're no longer resisting . . . you're not saying no to drugs, you're saying yes to Jesus. And that's a cliche, but the truth of it is that you're allowing God to live inside of you. And you have like, a life force, or a power that's working inside of you that helps your spirit...

Why would you mention drugs? In the Bible, drugs are mentioned. Priests used drugs, especially to get close to God. And religions all throughout the world – I know drugs are evil, but I'm talking about Christians and drugs in general were used for religious services, so that they could see spirits, almost like to allow access to visualize a spiritual entity – or was that just an example?

It was just an example, because I know there are lots of people – like the heroin addicts, they struggle with something...

Some people are . . . I mean, I know someone who, at a very young age, became a heroin addict. This person once used heroin. This was totally evil; this guy had given him this free stuff, and he didn't even know what he was doing and this guy gave it to him, saying, "Yeah, it'll make you feel good." And he got hooked and then the only way he could get more was to work for him. So, I mean, he can't be at fault because he became a heroin addict. What was that you were saying?

Just that the whole idea, the approach to sin, I take a completely different approach than what we call the religious approach and you might hear a lot of Christians talk about that they're not "religious," but that they have a personal relationship with God. And the nitty gritty behind that is a religion, or a man-made set of rules to do this and do that, and "don't ever do this" – that's relying upon your own power or your own flesh to resist sin and I believe the Bible teaches that all have sinned. Everybody's blown it, and that's why we need a Savior. And the Savior not only saves you from Hell, but He also gives you a life on this Earth that's a different kind of life, and it's a life that actually, I guess, to boil it down, it gives you the power to say no, versus trying to say no yourself. I don't know if that makes sense or not.

Uh, yeah, it does. It does make sense. But it could also give me a license to say, "Well, I can sin, and I can get away with it, because I can always, you know, I can sin and I can admit to my God I failed, and He'll forgive me for it." So in a sense, it's okay. You know, perhaps these priests had thoughts like that, and that's what caused it, etc., etc. And they might think, "Well, it's not quite so bad, because He will forgive me."

Yeah, I actually do believe that, but I think if I did that, it would be like taking a can of spray paint and painting the f-word on Christ's face. To me, it's like, I love Jesus, so I have the freedom to go out and get stoned, but if I did that, I would probably make Him cry. And because I love Him – even though I love Him and have the ability to get forgiven for it – if I really love Him, I'm not gonna do it. That's like if I slap you in the face, and I say, "Oh, Dani, I'm sorry," and you say, "I forgive you," and then I slap you again, and I say, "Oh, Dani, I'm sorry." You keep doing that over and over again and pretty soon you don't believe that I'm sorry. And so then it comes down to what's wrong with you.

I think it comes back down to being habitual, like, and individualism. I actually believe the same thing as you do, but not in the sense as you do. There is a God, but not all God all the time. I think His whole attributes . . . but it basically comes down to the same thing. We were put on this earth, and we have all these various rules or regulations, or we were born with a creed, and what have you. And I think it's up to each individual to know when to stop and when not to stop. I would consider myself more in the camp of the fallen angel, the dark angel. I wouldn't . . . I mean, you've spoken to me. You know that I'm quite reasonable and probably quite friendly. But actually, I look at it more like, as a natural force, because that's the kind of thing that attracts me. I've always been basically born . . . my parents were liberal. They were church people, but they were liberal . . . early ghost movies and that kind of thing. And I got drawn into that kind of thing and I knew that was me. And I denied myself that, until I actually accepted it, because when I was young, things were forced upon me, and I was scared to . . . you know . . . even though I was told there was no such thing. Even so, I knew I believed it, but even still, I was struck down about it. Even though my parents were liberal, it all still affected me. That's just who I am and what I am and I'm an individual. I've been born with so much, I've had the same attributes that you were – the same challenges, the same decisions. I could kill people or I could help people. I draw my own lines and I think that I'm quite reasonable with it. I've got certain moral codes, you know, just like certain moral codes that decide which things are illegal. There's a lot of people who listen to our music and our band. It's not negative, and I agree with you. But at the same time, in the message, if you were to, like, formulate it and eventually come to a conclusion at the end of it, it wouldn't be despair at the end of it, or anything like that. It's hope. It's a kind of hope that our kind people particularly like that sort of thing. And you understand what I mean. Everybody should have their own goal and everybody should have their own ideals. And it's (the) forcing of other people's opinions that turn people away from Who you call God. So, I mean, I still see that you can appreciate my viewpoints and I've sat here and I can appreciate your viewpoints. But who can definitely say which one of us is right? There's nothing that proves it. No one can. The thing you're quite afraid of, I mean, the transition between the life I have now and death. There's no escaping death. And that's where the (bleep) industry comes in, because, you know, everybody would like to be immortal. Jesus, in a kind of way, was regarded as a (bleep) type. And that's what the imagery comes from, like the desire to cheat death, in a kind of way, the union of blood. And to the point of death, I don't think that either me or you are right or wrong.

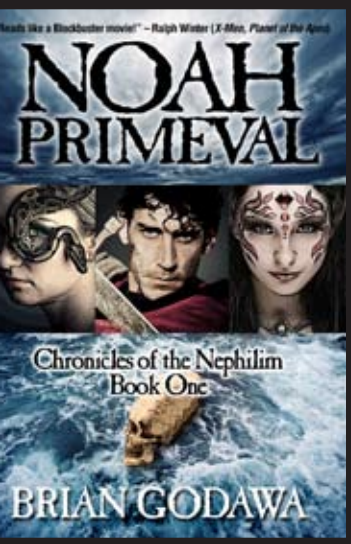
"I am not a fan of the Satanic Bible, because I think it's probably just as bad as organized religion."

Continued on page 42

BRIAN GODAWA
AUTHOR | NOAH PRIMEVAL

AN INTERVIEW BY ALLAN AGUIRRE

noahprimeval.com | (fb/twitter: allanAguirre)



"The paradigm I was raised in was very classical evangelical. And so this subject matter didn't fit at first. But I started to say, 'Well, if the Bible says it, I have to believe it.' I have to adjust my theology to meet the Bible."
—Brian Godawa, on his book *Noah Primeval*

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God (The Watchers) saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. There were giants (The Nephilim) on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.
Genesis 6: 1-2, 4

The time period in *Noah Primeval* – a period the author based on historical and biblical research, as well as other ancient Sumerian and Hebrew text – is a period not well known or widely discussed in Christian circles, making *Noah Primeval* a timely and significant read. Timely and significant (to this writer), because Jesus did say "as in the age of Noah, so shall it be in the end"… and there's something about "Sons of God" that should excite and intrigue all of us.

For many years, Genesis 6:1-4 had always been the freakiest chapter in the whole Bible to Brian until he started reading biblical scholar Michael Heiser's material on the divine council. Brian soon discovered what he considers a theological thread that begins in Genesis and goes all the way to the New Testament. That thoroughly embedded thread – a storyline in the biblical text that he had not seen before – came alive to him.

This isn't a storyline that negates his other beliefs, because it isn't a different storyline. The storyline of Judaism and the Messiah is still in place. This just added a new dimension to it. That's what inspired him to actually write the book as a novel. That and the subculture of two parts Christian and non-Christian interested in the Nephilim and ancient history. He wanted the freedom to add his imagination to the mix and, when writing about a Bible character, a lot of times Christians are understandably very protective of the canon, and Brian is a Christian.

He started reading about Nephilim and the Sons of God and started to learn that the phrase "Sons of God" is not a sort of poetic reference, but actually a theological term that finds itself throughout the biblical text; On Mount Sinai, God coming with His holy ones and flaming ministers of fire, His council of ten-thousands of ten-thousands of Holy Ones, Job, Kings, Psalms and the New Testament. In a normal read-through one can sort of gloss over them, but upon threading them together one sees that God has this council, this notion of the divine bureaucracy, so to speak, and Brian didn't actually like seeing this. However, as a Christian believer, he's committed to the belief that what God says in the Bible is true even if he doesn't think it's true, even if it conflicts with his paradigm. It was this pathway that entered Brian into *Noah Primeval* and then, of course, the connection to what would be the Nephilim.

"The problem lies with the evangelical humanistic view that the physical world is all there is."
—Brian Godawa

Can something of this breadth, of this magnitude, be so easily hidden or masked in the biblical text or is it simply a case of common knowledge lost? Has our pigeonholing of what and how we believe coupled with our fear of expanding those borders and lines to blame for this loss? Yes. It's not that this has been hidden – it's that we've lost it and/or the enemy has veiled it. This information was understood within the ancient's paradigm. (Note: Because Christianity has a history of people saying, "Oh, here's this new hidden, esoteric truth that the church has missed", it's important to clarify that neither Brian nor I are saying that. What we're saying is, "It's only hidden to us because of our ignorance.")

It's "hidden" in plain sight and is part of the story of Scripture. It begins in the Garden with the first Messianic promise – the battle, that epic, spiritual battle – into the New Testament where Paul talks about our fight against principalities and powers in the heavenly places. This isn't just a worldly battle going on. Brian's study would re-open that aspect of Scripture that had been closed out of his own ignorance.

If our physical reality is a manifestation of that spiritual realm, as believers, our safety and growth lies in the constant reminder and alignment with that realm. The problem lies with the evangelical influence of scientific naturalism and the humanistic view that the physical world is all there is and, of course, the denial of that humanistic view, "'Oh, yes, no, I don't believe in that. I believe in spiritual beings.' But we live as if there is no other spiritual reality. I have that problem," confesses Brian.

Imagine: The earth as evil as Scripture depicts where the ancient "gods" or fallen Sons of God are real beings that, through their rebellion, pervert God's creation. They are worshiped instead of the living God and cohabitate with human women, creating hybrids – global annihilation will be the end result. What manner of man would be considered righteous in that scenario? Could Noah be a warrior likened unto Joshua or David?

Brian wants to tell the story of Noah within these parameters.

Does further theological study suggest these Sons of God knew of a Messianic promise and in their fallen state attempted to corrupt the human bloodline to thwart His birth? Was their goal, in a broader sense, to corrupt creation, a creation based on the basis of separation and holiness; male from female, land

from water – angelic flesh from human flesh? Was the genetic manipulation of human, plant and animal DNA by The Watchers the cause of the flood? Does God create His own separate race of humans, Israel, and instruct them to drive out the giants from and annihilate the inhabitants of Canaan – the Holy Land – the very geographical location of our story, pre- and post-deluge – for this very reason?

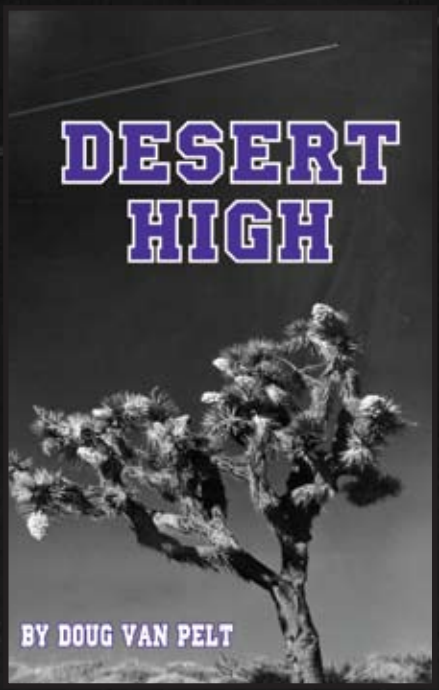
Maybe Brian's completed series, *The Chronicles of the Nephilim,* will shed light on these and other questions from the biblical and historical text.

Until then, know that Jude and Peter both mention angels who violated their natural order and went after strange flesh. Any question in a Christian's mind – whether or not this notion of Nephilim and Sons of God is anything other than giants or divine beings having sex with humans – should be settled by the New Testament reference to this theological concept.

Twisted? Science Fiction? Mythology? Fantasy?

Noah Primeval is a novel. But what of its biblical and historical premise?

✖



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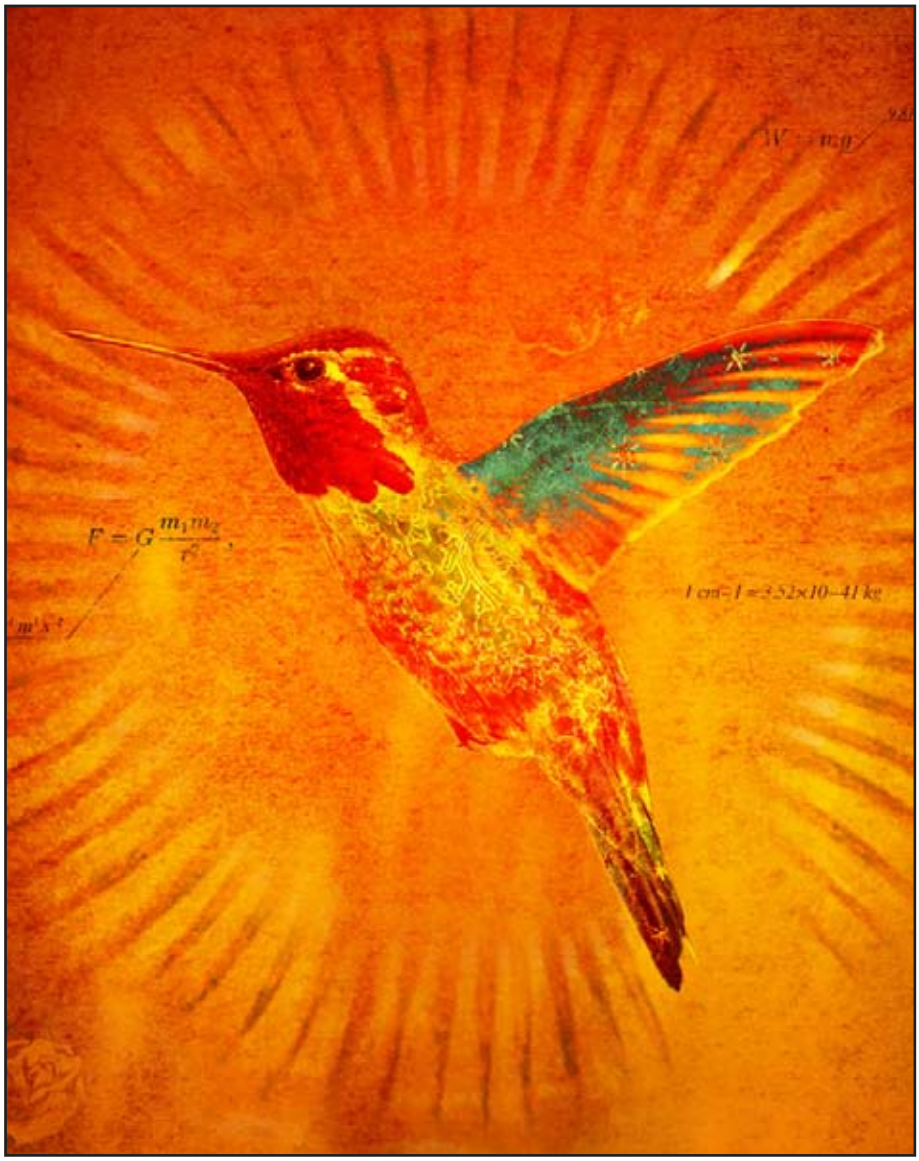
Album reviews

49 ALBUMS 54 GEAR, GADGETS, COMICS & FILM



DAVID CROWDER* BAND

GIVE US REST OR (A REQUIEM MASS IN C [THE HAPPIEST OF ALL KEYS])

*Requiem (requies; rest). It's also a term used for musical compositions associated with death and mourning. As the 7th and final installment from DC*B's 12-year career and selling over 1.6 million albums, this release combines all of the musical elements from previous releases (bluegrass, pop, hip hop, industrial, electronic, metal, classical, traditional choral arrangements) and adds Gregorian chant into a 34-song epic collection that DC*B fans will enjoy.*

This album largely follows the Requiem Mass utilizing much of the original text in some songs, while others step back and give a worship response to the text. This is where I believe the strength of this release (and DC*B in general) lies. From a place of musical experimentation and artistry springs forth a worship response. And isn't that what worship is?

As for songs that may work in a congregational setting, "Fall on Your Knees," "After All (Holy)" and "Oh Great Love of God" are easy for a congregation to grab ahold of and sing. And, to be sure, this release also has the hymn remakes of "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms/Tis So Sweet" and a remake of the classic Bill Gaither song "Because He Lives" as the final farewell.

➡

Rating system

05 *CLASSIC*
04 *FABULOUS*
03 *SOLID*
02 *SUSPECT*
01 *AMISS*
***** *1/2*

It's hard to believe this is the last studio release from DC*B, but there is a finality to it, capturing all of the elements and instrumentation that made for some of the most artistic expressions of worship in this generation. [SIX STEP] DAVID REYNOLDS

LIFE IN YOUR WAY

KINGDOMS

Life In Your Way makes a comeback with their EP combination album, *Kingdoms*. *Kingdoms* is the three EP's (*Kingdom of Man*, *God*, and *Darkness*) put into one fantastic reunion album. Life In Your Way comes back stronger than ever with powerful music and spiritually motivating lyrics. The music is very original and good for old school hardcore veterans looking to tear up the pit like they did back in 2005. There are no repetitive moments at all in *Kingdoms*. The vocal style is very old school. If you were a fan of bands like Beloved back in the day, you'll love the non-stop change-ups of *Kingdoms*. It's an album to enjoy for years to come and we can only hope for more albums like it from Life In Your Way. [COME&LIVE] NICK COTRUFO (THIS MOMENT IN HARDCORE)

KIROS

LAY YOUR WEAPONS DOWN

Outlaws and Prodigals, Kiros' three-song EP, might have provided fans with some idea of what was to come on the band's full-length, but it's also clear that it didn't do any justice to just how expansive *Lay Your Weapons Down* would be. Kiros' debut for Ain't No Grave Records is a powerful release that spans the space between modern and hard rock and sounds solid all the way. "Unshaken" is the impressive lead single that remains inventive while following the conventional rock formula. The acoustic sing-along "Passive Through" is a nice break from the proceedings, but the band's also able to crank up the amps on tunes like "Broken State." Such a strong debut gives rise to confidence for a bright future. [ANGR] MATT CONNER

BETRAYING THE MARTYRS

BREATHE IN LIFE

France's Betraying the Martyrs shakes Europe and the rest of the world with their full-length album, *Breathe In Life*. This album was written for straight-up metal heads. The breakdowns are destructive and unforgiving, and the riffs are merciless and intricate. The symphony in the background adds to the intensity of the metal. The low guttural growls are mad heavy, and the clean vocals are powerful and meaningful. Songs like "Martyrs" and "Man Made Disaster" will leave you convicted and begging for more! If you're a fan As I Lay Dying and Winds of Plague, Betraying the Martyrs is the band for you. It's going to be hard to top this album. [SUMERIAN] NICK COTRUFO (TMIH)

GOLDEN RESURRECTION

MAN WITH A MISSION

Another collection of fine melodic metal compositions has arrived from Golden Resurrection. Continuing where their previous album left off, *Man With a Mission* has a slightly more melodic vibe than the previous offering. The keyboards are a bit more pronounced in the first couple of tracks, but don't despair as the guitar heroics of Tommy Johannson continue to shine brilliantly forth. With a stronger lyrical output this time, Christian Liljegren shows why he is one of the most respected vocalists today. Strong hooks and effervescent melodies will grab even the most wary listener. Fans of Dio and Yngwie Malmsteen should be rejoicing in unison. Recommended. [DOOLITTLE] KEVEN CROTHERS

NOTHING TIL BLOOD

WHEN LIONS BECOME LAMBS

Nothing Til Blood released their debut album just in time to throw down this holiday season. Strike First's new band brings in heavy breakdowns and Spirit-filled lyrics throughout the album to get your attention, but unfortunately the vocals aren't very good. The lyrics may be powerful, but the vocals are sloppy and hard to follow at points. The album has its repetitive moments, but for the most part it stays on track and keeps changing things up. The finale of the album ("Depths of the Sea") is a worshipful outro and a good close. Nothing Til Blood has the talent, but they just need to explore it a little more. [STRIKE FIRST] NICK COTRUFO (TMIH)

RUN KID RUN

PATTERNS

If you notice the razor-sharp hooks on Run Kid Run's latest album, then you also won't be surprised to see names like Matt Thiessen and Mark Townsend attached as producers. *Patterns* is the third LP from the Tooth & Nail band and they've never sounded better. "Back to the Basics" is already a rock radio hit and serves as proof that RKR's finding a solid career groove. "Promise" reveals a softer side that balances the album well and combines with "War is Over" as the best showcase for David Josiah Curtis's vocal work. It's been three years since *Love at the Core* released and it's clear the boys haven't been wasting time. They've apparently been honing their craft, because this is a whip-smart pop/rock album. [TOOTH & NAIL] MATT CONNER

Ratings

	DV	Writer
David Crowder* Band *Give Us Rest or...*	04	03*
Life In Your Way *Kingdoms*	04	05
Kiros *Lay Your Weapons Down*		04
Betraying the Martyrs *Breathe In Life*	04	05
Golden Resurrection *Man With A Mission*	03	03
Nothing Til Blood *When Lions Become Lambs*	03*	03
Run Kid Run *Patterns*	03	04
We Are Leo *Hello*	03	02
Samestate *S/T*	03	03
A Plea For Purging *The Life and Death of A Plea for Purging*	04	04
Newsboys *God's Not Dead*	03	03
Rush of Fools *We Once Were*	03	03
We The Gathered *Believer*	03	03
Maylene and the Sons... *IV*	04*	04

WE ARE LEO

HELLO

They say to avoid judging a book by its cover. When it comes to new pop/rock band We Are Leo, you should really avoid forming an opinion from their first single. "Live For Love" is the Chicago quartet's first step into the radio scene and it's straight out of Rebecca Black's "Friday" material, even though it's somehow aiming for a Postal Service vibe. Simply put, it's a bad song. But the rest of the eight songs on *Hello*, the debut album, aren't that bad. While that's not exactly a selling point in itself, the step from the first single to others like "Oxygen" or "Colors" is definitely a major accomplishment. The latter is easily the best of an uninspiring bunch here, but at the very least the band should try to avoid the damage likely done by that first wrong step. [SKIES FALL] MATT CONNER

SAMESTATE

S/T

It's no surprise that producers Paul Moak (Seabird) and Brandon Paddock (Leeland) are involved in Samestate's debut EP, since they're regularly attached to bands with whip-smart melodies. That said, Samestate should also become the next feather in their production caps with the obvious upward trajectory they're on. Fans of Starfield, Seabird and Leeland should love Samestate from the outset. Lyrically, the material sticks close to Switchfoot's *Learning to Breathe* album, although musically speaking, the album is much more straightforward alt-rock. "Hurricane" is arena- and radio-ready, but "Shadows" is the EP's winner with an immediate sing-along quality that fans will instantly remember at live shows. [SPARROW] MATT CONNER

A PLEA FOR PURGING

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF...

A Plea for Purging does it again! This is the band's fourth release and there is a bit of a change in Plea's overall sound, but it doesn't change the sheer brutality we have grown to know from each album. This one has begun to take on hints of nü-metal. The guitar work has matured and showcased some of their best riffs to date, like the opening of "The Heart of a Child." Andy Atkin's vocals rock your face with his loud guttural growls, not to mention his lyrics are brutally honest and make you think. The message of the album is that you should question what you are told and seek the Truth. This is an intense album, and should be owned by everyone. [FACEDOWN] MATTHEW LEONARD (TMIH)

NEWSBOYS

GOD'S NOT DEAD

Michael Tait is settling into his role quite well as frontman for the legendary Newsboys. If anything, the transition from Peter Furler to Tait shows that a great hook cures all ills in the music industry, and *God's Not Dead*, the Newsboys' latest, is filled with memorable anthems intended for arenas around the globe. "The King is Coming" is the perfect leadout for the Newsboys' declarative theme of the reign and presence of God. The tune forms the first half of a one-two punch with the title track providing the second sonic jab. The two are a powerful combo that form a proper backbone for the songs presented here. The straightforward "Savior of the World" is one of the highlight tracks and should become as popular as some of the remakes here – a list that includes "Mighty To Save" and "Revelation Song." Not all of the tracks are as up-front as the aforementioned ones. "All The Way" provides a nice acoustic refrain near album's end, while "More Than Enough" sounds straight out of a Matt Redman album. Tait's vocal work is equally at home no matter what the tempo or arrangement, which speaks well of his selection to front the band. *God's Not Dead* fits well alongside other Newsboys albums that have helped define Christian music over the last two decades. The names may change, but the song remains the same. [INPOP] MATT CONNER

RUSH OF FOOLS

WE ONCE WERE

It's all too tempting to write Rush of Fools off as Switchfoot-lite, particularly when vocalist Wes Willis displays such an uncanny resemblance to Jon Foreman. Songs like "You're The Medicine" finds Willis singing in Foreman's familiar world-weary voice. Nevertheless, once we get to the key line, "You're the medicine/Not a sedative," all is forgiven. Later, Willis exclaims, "I wanna feel my heart beat again," just like our friend in Switchfoot might do it. Rush Of Fools are particularly recommended for Christian listeners that may not immediately pick up on the seemingly obvious spiritual-ness in Switchfoot songs. Foreman never learned how to write in Christian-ese, whereas Rush of Fools sound more comfortable speaking the mother tongue; especially during the theologically centered "Grace Found Me." There might be a whole lot more meat in Switchfoot songs, but Rush Of Fools creates some truly sweet milk – even for those that are lactose intolerant. [ENTERTAINMENT ONE] DAN MACINTOSH

WE THE GATHERED

BELIEVER

We The Gathered is one of Strike First's newest bands of 2011. This band is young and has potential. They put a lot of heart and effort in being a heavy, melodic metalcore band with a spiritual message. The song "Savior" is probably the best song on the album. It showcases the band's talent from heavy breakdowns to soft clean violins during the bridge. About midway through the album the band brings back the melodic sounds heard from past bands like Dead Poetic and Nodes of Ranvier. However, they need to capitalize on melody in their songs like "Undefined." A listener might want something it can remember after the album has stopped playing. Also, the vocals done by frontman Lance Augustine need more of a range and to be less breathy. It's great to see a band try to bring melodic metalcore back to the stagnated scene. A true breath of fresh air. This band will go places as they mature as a band if they keep their focus on Christ and work hard. [STRIKE FIRST] MATTHEW LEONARD (TMIH)

MAYLENE & THE SONS OF DISASTER

IV

Someone took these boys for a drive into the suburbs ... and it shows. Are they as aggro and ready to fight as before? Well, I wouldn't pick a fight with any of 'em, but something has tamed this beast a bit – just a tad. Don't read too much into this report card. They still whip your tail as if it's their business, with bent strings, passive vocal effects and the right amount of wah-wah dialed in. Maybe sitting in the principal's office broke a little of their strong will. I blame it on a slightly cleaned-up production. It sounds more like an Ozzy album than a Black Label Society firestorm, which isn't exactly a disaster. While this band pretty much single-handedly saved Southern Rock a few years ago, polishing off the rough edges might not have been the best move for their enigmatic fourth album ... but watch and listen to the radio, because airplay and massive success could prove this old dog wrong. [FERRET] KERN COUNTY KID, THE

LIFEstyle

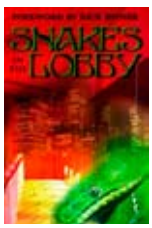
books

SING FREE NOW! | MARK BOSNIAN
This veteran performer and vocal coach gives real, practical advice on how to improve vocal performance. "Singing is all about harnessing the energy flowing through your body," he says. "Everybody has a voice and can sing. It's the most accessible form of art on the planet. Suitable for newbie and expert. [Armenoid] *DV*

NEVER STOP HOLDING HANDS | SHARA GRYLLS
Marriage is for the brave and adventurous. No one would better understand this maxim than Shara Grylls, wife of adventurer and television star Bear Grylls. Shara shares the couple's favorite quotes, words of wisdom and cartoons in a new gift book entitled *Never Stop Holding Hands: And Other Marriage Survival Tips*. It's made up of advice the couple asked its wedding guests to offer as a wedding present. "We were overwhelmed with great advice," Shara states. Thankfully, she shares it. [David C. Cook] *DV*

TO MY SONS | BEAR GRYLLS
In his book, *To My Sons: Lessons for the Wild Adventure Called Life*, world renowned thrill-seeker Bear Grylls recounts his favorite quotes, words of wisdom and spiritual insights for the benefit of his three boys and for the enjoyment of readers everywhere. A coffeetable type pick-up-and-read-a-nibble-at-a-time with solid advice. [David C. Cook] *DV*

I AM SECOND | DAVID STERRET & DOUG BENDER
Brian "Head" Welch, UFC star Vitor, Colt McCoy, Sam Bradford, surfer Bethany Hamilton all tell their stories of God seriously helping them out in times of need. *I am Second* is a movement meant to inspire people of all kinds to live for God and for others (Actors, athletes, musicians, business leaders, drug addicts, your next-door neighbor, people like you). The authentic stories on iamsecond.com provide insight into dealing with typical struggles of everyday living. [Thomas Nelson] *DV*



SNAKES IN THE LOBBY | SCOTT MACLEOD
Anyone that's been involved in the Christian music business will be familiar with the infamous "lobby" of the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Nashville. It's connected to the Nashville Convention Center and has housed much of the activity of "Gospel Music Week" (aka GMA), which includes the act of "schmoozing" and the see-and-be-seen mingling that counters the humility of Christ. To fully "get" this book, it helps to be familiar with the charismatic scene and "prophetic words," but this one nails the sleazy underbelly in the head. Hey man, nice shot. [Morning Star] *DV*

LIFEstyle gear

GHS ELECTRIC COATED BOOMERS®
The latest twist on their classic Boomers® line begins with the finest nickel-plated steel wire and coated using a finely regulated process. This unique technology coats the outer wires, which are then wrapped around a high-quality core wire producing a string that has outstanding extended performance life with powerful tone. The plain steel strings are also coated to give a well-balanced feel. [ghsstrings.com]

THE XTENSOR
Remember those hand-squeezer things you'd see weightlifters and guitarists use to increase their strength and dexterity? This robotic-looking thing has gone to the next level and the opposite direction, which is good news for guitarists, because it actually seems to help the muscles, tendons and motion by offering opposing resistance to strengthen. Includes spare bands and an instructional booklet. Practical and smart, but darn odd-looking. [thextensor.com] *DV*

AUDIX TM1 PLUS
Audix is proud to announce the introduction of the TM1 Plus, a combination kit which includes the TM1 measurement microphone, threaded acoustic windscreen, shock mount clip, ½ inch calibrator adaptor and microphone calibration data on CD. This kit is especially useful for sound engineers who rely on measurement systems to properly tune a PA system for live sound venues. [audixusa.com]

WORSHIP MUSICIAN MAGAZINE
A companion magazine to *Christian Musician Mag*, our friend Bruce Adolph publishes an electronic/online and print magazine that caters to meet the specific needs of musicians and, in this case, the worship musician. Read it for free online.
[christianmusician.com/magazines] *DV*

LIFEstyle

graphic novels

TIMETRAP (VOLUME 6)
The TimeFlyz are led to 1610 where they meet Galileo, the latest target in Darchon's evil scheme. While making their escape from Darchon, the TimeFlyz, with Galileo and a mechanical menace in tow, get trapped within the timestream. It's all up to Laurel to get them out of their predicament.. [zgraphicnovels.com] *DV*

THE EYE WITNESS
The Eye Witness series uniquely blends a fully illustrated modern day action-thriller with the story of the birth of the Christian faith ... from the Passion Week through the book of Acts. For the first time, all four books of the award-winning *Eye Witness* graphic novel series are collected in one beautiful and easy-to-store slipcase package. [headpress.info] *DV*

MUPPET KING ARTHUR
Many have sought the Holy Grail, and many have failed. Now the Muppets present some very good reasons why, as they recount the fantastic quest of King Arthur and his Muppets of the Round Table! This classic tale of adventure, romance, and magic is told once again, but this time with more frogs, chickens, bears, and Whatnots than you can shake an Excalibur at! In the words of Fozzie, it will be a 'knight' to remember! [everythingcomics.ca] *DV*

REBUILDING FAITH (VOLUME 6)
In the sixth book in this biblical epic, Daniel relates his experience in the lion's den to Iddo and his grandson Zechariah as they prepare to return to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon. Zechariah thinks about Daniel as he helps to rebuild the temple and receives his own prophetic ministry. [zgraphicnovels.com] *DV*

LIFEstyle film

COWBOYS & ALIENS
One of those fun movies that plays with your head by not providing an adequate explanation to begin the story, but figuring out just who the main character, Jake Lonergan (Daniel Craig), really is and what he's doing turns out to be half the fun. The mysterious introduction of Harrison Ford's wealthy rancher character, Colonel Woodrow Dolarhyde is as fun as the cantankerous personality he plays. Notice the coyly descriptive character names? The alien orangutan-like creatures move at blinding speed and are kind of frightening. The oddball pairing of western and alien sci-fi is a fun experiment that works on most levels, which is no doubt a result of the stellar production team, which includes heavyweights like Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Alex Kurtzman, Roberto Orci and Jon Favreau. Here's hoping for more collaborations with behind-the-camera A-talent like this. It was refreshing to see a preacher character ("Preacher Meacham," played by Clancy Brown) actually appear sensible and offer some solid advice. He tells the whipped Doc character, "Some friendly advice: Get a gun and learn how to use it." There's also some interesting dialog about feeling like God isn't there or doesn't like us, demons and the respect a man of God can earn by being helpful. All the extras that are now becoming common with the Blu-Ray "Combo Pack" are pretty sweet, which include a DVD and digital copy of the film plus the "Ultraviolet" cloud-like version that'll play across multiple platforms. [Universal] *DV*
[Cuss: 17 | Gore: 6 | Sex: 0.1 | Spiritual Conversations: 90]

COURAGEOUS

Here's another tear-jerker film that presses on real-life family issues – spotlighting the man's role as father. Like both a good country song (that makes you cry) and a good preacher/prophet that'll cut to the chase and the quick, this one challenges the viewer with lump-in-the-throat emotion to be a better father, a better parent and a better person. The little church that said it could, who brought us (*Facing the Giants* and *Fireproof*) keep recycling the story of redemption, but dress it up in new roles and situations that keep it fresh and compelling (enough).
[Sony Pictures] *DV* [Cuss: 0 | Gore: 0 | Sex: 0 | Spiritual Conversations: 100]

ECHOTONE
This music documentary dives right in to the puzzling controversy that's risen after developers responded to the demand for more urban living quarters in downtown Austin, Texas – the "live music capital of the world." It's so funny how people's desire to be right in the midst of a bustling music scene would then turn around and complain about the noise, asking for zoning laws that would mute the late-night music. It's too bad that more of the people that complained won't ever see this film and the falacy of their idiotic rants. Shot and edited with a filmmaker's care, this documentary does a good job of mixing live performance with the voices in this mess. And the problem that's tackled really becomes the backdrop to a reality-movie about the harsh conditions of being an artist in today's music world. One of the artists (The Soundteam's Bill Baird) makes a joke referencing one of his songs, how "Yaweh must not be pleased," as his financial situation sucks so much. He offers some personal insight into being signed to a major label when he references a meeting with a label person that includes a $500 bottle of wine at the table (no doubt paid for with the band's money) that really opens his eyes and turns him off to the ridiculous situation. Of course, the sights and sounds of the city take center stage all through the film, making it fun for anyone who's been in Austin. The claim on the film's website is really accurate: "...a cultural portrait of the modern American city examined through the lyrics and lens of its creative class." Sometimes the movie moves slow, but overall it's very refreshing to get this artistic perspective on our changing culture. [Reversal] *DV*
[Cuss: 26 | Gore: 0 | Sex: 0 | Spiritual Conversations: 40]

SNOWMEN

Another film to throw in the ring with the popular Christmas season collection of films to watch with the family, *Snowmen* is a humorous and heartfelt coming-of-age story about three unlikely heroes and the winter that changed their lives forever. After a surprising discovery in the snow catapults three small-town boys into the spotlight, the best friends hatch a plan to be remembered forever by setting a Guinness World Records® title. Along the way, the trio battles schoolyard bullies, unites their community and discovers that – while fame may be fleeting – true friendship lasts forever. [Mpower Pictures]

KILLER ELITE
Bullets, fists and action are all flying around in this thriller. Jason Statham plays the character Danny Bryce, a mercenary forced to un-retire to save an old friend named Hunter (Robert DeNiro). He must carry out a $6,000,000 assassination job that Hunter failed at. If he doesn't pull off the nearly impossible task of taking out former elite SAS agents, then Hunter dies, which gives the job an extra dose of urgency. Primo entertainment for a boy's night in. [Universal] *DV*
[Cuss: 38 | Gore: 3 | Sex: 3 | Spiritual Conversations: 45]

KEY to Ratings = number of scenes w/cussing, gratuitous sex, violence & how easy it would be to start a "spiritual conversation" after viewing it with someone.

LIFEstyle gadgets

AUTOTUNE FOR IPHONE APP

Make a call, slide the selection to "tune me" or "both" and your voice(s) are autotuned. Crazy, hard to figure out, but a fun little toy/app. The downside is that once your 30 minutes included with the $2.99 app purchase expires, you've got to buy more for your account to make these quasi-prank calls. If you're willing to shell out $4.99 for 180 minutes; $1.99 for 60 minutes or 99 cents for 20 minutes, then your fun is to be had. [newhula.com] *DV* [Setup Ease: B | Performance: B+ | Price: $2.99]

PONG IPHONE 4 CASE

Pong has done the iPhone case right with the less-is-more philosophy. They also take the topic of cellphone radiation seriously and this design (thanks to a small, patented plate in the back bottom) deflects this radiation away from the user's head. [pongresearch.com] *DV* [Setup Ease: A- | Performance: A | Price: $49]

PONG IPAD 2 CASE

It's always nice to see competitors better a handy gadget or device, which Pong has done. Sure, the magnetic sleep/awaken mode action has been done before, as has the faux leather soft material, but the three nuances here that set it apart are the clever pyramid/origami fold action that props it up for video watching; the semi-hard rubber backing; and the radiation exposure prevention (what?) that it offers. Well, two out of three ain't bad. [pongresearch.com] *DV* [Setup Ease: A+ | Performance: A+ | Price: $99]

There have been times in the past, like with Elijah on Mt. Carmel, where they said, "Okay, whoever is right, call your gods down and burn the sacrifice," and then they had certain priests come and try to call fire down and it didn't work. And then Elijah goes, "Okay God, bring it down," and He brought down fire. That was like an example of saying, "Okay, prove it to me that God exists," and where it happened. And today, you know, you don't see that happen too often – or maybe you just don't see people taking the risk often enough to say, "Okay..." you know?

What is your Hell? Is it just symbolic of Hell or do you actually imagine that there is a kind of place . . . I mean, not like hellfire and torment or whatever. But can you see Hell as like being on earth and that people who have no faith and who let themselves go to waste and let themselves be overruled by their own desires and without any sort of restraint and let themselves get involved with drugs, etc, etc. Can you see that as Hell? Not people with horns torturing.

I can see how it could be called a Hell, but I do believe what Jesus said about Hell. Jesus was actually the one in the Bible Who spoke the most about Hell being a place where you could cut up a worm and the worm would never be quenched and there was eternal fire and you'd be thirsty and couldn't drink. Some of the things we just attribute to just mad old priests were actually said by Jesus, Who we often look at as this loving person, Who was real gentle. But He actually had quite a few things to say about Hell and judgement. So, yeah, I do believe that . . . the way I look at the whole thing with nature is that there was a chance where creation itself fell, you know, the whole thing in Genesis, with original sin. And in Creation, we now have cells that randomly attack the body and there are results of sin. Like, if somebody takes a certain vice, it's gonna affect their health. It's just like the end result. Some people call that karma, but I think there are just some natural laws that...

But wouldn't it not be terrible to find out at the point of death that it was all nothing? That living was a picture of Hell? You know, there was no high government and that the whole purpose of life was just to live and at the point of death you realized that. And you think of the temptations you could've done during your life. Would you have regret then? And you realized that these are all just stories and things that people try and grasp. I mean, I can understand that people try and grasp ideas and try to formulate ideas as to why we're here. And there must be forces, governments and things making sure that we live in the ways, abide by certain laws and that ethnic groups are treated well, etc., etc. But what if all of that meant absolutely nothing and the whole purpose of life was just to live and procreate and continue the race?

That's a good question. I can honestly answer that I have been fulfilled and I would not have regrets, because I have actually talked to God and heard the voice of the living Creator, God, I believe. And so, to me, it's just an incredible life.

If you were to say that to a psychiatrist... Let's say you did something wrong by accident and you would say to a psychiatrist at your trial, "I have heard the voice of God." I think they would actually think you were clinically insane.

Probably.

And likewise, I have done things with magic and stuff, and witchcraft and occultism and a few things like that – nothing really over-experienced – and I have seen things which I believe are totally real, not in conjunction with drugs or anything. I have seen things before me, that there was no explanation for and I felt I was very close to the point of death and there was something that wasn't normal. It was frightening, but it was . . . I couldn't tell, there was no explanation. All I knew is that there was some aura there. I have no explanation for any of it, to tell you the truth, but then again, that was (bleep).

"But wouldn't it not be terrible to find out at the point of death that it was all nothing?"

I think it's been really cool talking to you. I need to let you off to an appointment I have at 4.

Well, I have another interview anyway.

Well, I'd love to sit down and have dinner, maybe, when you come to Austin, Texas. That's where I'm out of.

I wondered where it was.

Yeah, it's a great city. But, I've really enjoyed it. I've had conversations with Geezer Butler and the guy from Morbid Angel and Ronnie James Dio and all those have been nice people, but I think the conversation we just had was one of the most fascinating. I felt like each of us got to express ourselves in a real way and I thought that was pretty cool.

Okay, thank you. It's been a pleasure.

Yeah, well same here, Dani.

Okay, cheerio, then.

✖

PICK OF THE LITTER

Sanhedrin
Sanhedrin is an amazing side project from Overcome's new guitar player, Steven Cosand. Combining metal's grindcore with punk's power violence. With their demo cassette *Pro Human. Pro Life* hitting the streets in early 2012, Sanhedrin became one of my favorite finds of 2011. For fans of Harms Way, Hatred Surge, All Pigs Must Die and Trap Them. (Rob Shameless)
facebook.com/synedrion

Atkins/May Project
A special project and power metal extravaganza with former/founding (obviously, pre-Halford) Judas Priest frontman (dude founded and fronted Priest for four years, having apparently written the song "Victim of Changes") and Christian metal guitar wizard (and Metal Meltdown regular) Paul May. (Doug Van Pelt)
atkinsmayproject.com

☆ Adam Baker
Getting past the cover art and first CCM-y track, "Eagles (When We Wait)," which isn't easy, will lead to a welcomed treasure of Neil Young-ish gems that beg for residence on your playlist. Get to know this guy now. (DV)
adambakermusic.co.uk

Wilde Starr
Old-school power metal with great riffs, chops and nice vocals from the talented London Wilde, who happens to play all the keys, rhythm guitar and bass, too. (DV)
wildestarr.com

☆ Cast A Fire
A really good original-sounding band with a diverse mix of power modern rock that would go well alongside Red, but dynamics that range between heavy riffing and tender ballads (like the epic and excellent "Let This Song Be Heard," with its chilling chant-like BGVs that conjure memories of the first time of hearing Underoath's fade-out to "It's Dangerous Business Walking Out Your Front Door"). (DV)
castafire.com

Laughing Season
This 3-piece band from Clovis, New Mexico, seems to wear its Nirvana influence loudly, but is slightly more pop/commercial than the genre-busting legends. (DV)
facebook.com/laughingseason

Danen Kane
Really good Maroon 5 vocal histronics with a laid-back Dave Matthews type vibe. (DV)
danenkane.com

Johnny Newman
Great production on this epic/symphonic metal release, *More Than Ever*. Riffing, shredding and prog-noodling galore. Turns out Johnny Newman graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in music composition, which he put to good use in this studio recording with metal legends Steve DiGiorgio (Testament, Death) and Yanic Bercier (Gone in April, Quo Vadis). 100% of the proceeds from the single "Damages" (featuring mezzo soprano Ksenia Berestovskaya) go to the Community Coalition Against Human-Trafficking. (DV)
johnny-newman.com

☆ Unexpected Mercy
Screamo that stretches its influence from slamming hardcore to almost black metal speeds. *The Beginning* 5-song EP sounds really good. (DV)
facebook.com/unexpectedmercy

☆ Victoria Awake
This two-man project marries keyboard pop with swell guitar chops and infectious hooks that beg for radio airplay. (DV)
victoriaawake.com

The Sky Divided
Straight-up modern rock a la Nickelback or Grammatrain that gets better with repeated listenings. Swells and choruses unite. (DV)
myspace.com/theskydivided

Reece Lincoln Band
Good, smooth and soulful blues rock with pop hooks. (DV)
reecelincoln.com

The Christian & Art

WITH KEMPER CRABB

The Disconnect: Why Evangelicals Make Bad Art (Part the Thirtieth)

In the past twenty-nine issues, we have examined the reasons that Evangelical Americans, who reportedly make up one-fifth to one-fourth of our population, have produced so few examples of quality art of any kind. We have divined that this lack of quality art is largely due to limited (and/or distorted) views of Biblical teaching (or failure to act on the implications of its teaching), despite the fact that artistry is unquestionably one of the categories envisioned in "every good work" in which Scripture is to instruct Christians (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

We saw the negative effects of sub-Biblical beliefs on the doctrines of Creation and Eschatology, which result in denigrations of the physical world and time as appropriate theaters of God's Purposes, encouraging pessimism concerning history, and of seeing the world as Satan's domain, which needs only to be escaped from, rather than redeemed and fulfilled.

We also saw that deficient perspectives on the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity lead to a destruction of Scriptural justification of symbols as simultaneously revealing both multiple and unified meanings. Deficient Trinitarian views lead as well to seeing men not as mysterious bearers of God's Image, but as simplistic machines manipulable by quick-fix formulae.

We turned then to a consideration of the implications of Christ's Incarnation, in which God, in the Second Person of the Trinity, joined Himself to a fully Human Nature and Body, in order to be the Perfect Sacrifice to atone for fallen man's sin by dying in their place. As summed up by the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), the Incarnation is accomplished in Christ Jesus since He is "at once complete in Godhead and complete in Manhood, truly God and truly Man..."

This doctrine is a refutation of the Classical Pagan and Pietistic views, which pit matter and spirit against each other despite the fact that Scripture teaches that physicality is a proper arena for spirituality (Rom. 12:1-2).

A departure from an emphasis on the Biblical teaching that the Lord Jesus is both fully God and fully Man simultaneously yields a distorted view of reality and redemption, resulting, among other disasters, in a malformed and shallow artistic expression.

There exists an old saying: "Ideas have consequences." Yet this saying presupposes that the holder of ideas will act in terms of them. Should he not act in terms of those ideas, the ideas will, perforce, not result in consequences, and, insofar as the effectiveness of the ideas are concerned, he may as well not have had them, should he fail to act upon them.

This, of course, is the rub, not only to this saying, but for all of life. It is required for things to happen, that (1) knowledge, whether intuited, experienced, or taught in some fashion, must be gained (the idea), and (2) that the one who has gained that knowledge act upon the world around him in terms of the knowledge he holds (action). Without both these steps, the consequences of the idea are still-born.

Everything that men have done, good or ill, on this earth is the result of those men having gained and acted upon knowledge they have gained. It happens all the time. And in point of fact, this entire series has been a study in men's either failing to obtain good knowledge or failing to act upon or it, or failing to obtain godly knowledge and acting upon it to regrettable consequences, especially as these actions, knowledge and consequences relate to the subject of Evangelically-produced art.

As recounted above, the failure to obtain correct knowledge/ideas about Reality as revealed in the Bible, and/or of action based on that correct Biblical knowledge, has resulted in the proliferation of puerile, unBiblical and bad art, which afflicts the Evangelical Church today.

The answer is, therefore, not rocket science: Learn the correct Biblical Truths in Scripture and act upon them. It is not enough to learn them and do nothing, as this will result in no consequences, no desired change in the Church's art.

We must learn and act upon that knowledge. If we do so, we will change the Church and, ultimately, the world; and will no longer have to be ashamed of our artistic unfaithfulness before God.

[kempercrabb.net]

The way I see it by Chris Wighiman

THE EARLY BIRD...

Ever feel like life has gotten a little cluttered?

Like there is so much to do that sometimes you are not sure how you will ever accomplish it all? Even with all the smart phone apps out there intended to us get "organized" and "connected" it seems that many times they only add to our list of responsibilities. We live our lives at breakneck speeds with so much happening at times it becomes difficult to even enjoy all that is going on.

The first chapter in the book of Mark is stuffed with several huge events in the life of Jesus. In order he: is baptized by John the Baptist, announced to be the Son of God, led to the wilderness to be tempted, calls his first disciples, teaches in the synagogue, drives out a demon, heals Peter's mother and when literally the whole town shows up on his doorstep with their sick he heals them too!

What is Jesus' response to this sequence of H-U-G-E life events?

A vacation?

No way.

Well, then a long weekend, he deserved it.

Nope.

He sleeps in though, right?

No … Mark 1:35 says that "very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

We might think we have a lot going on, and in some ways we do, but Jesus just went through this barrage of H-U-G-E events in his life and in the free moments he finds to himself what does he do? Jesus steals time away to be alone with God and pray. Time with God was an essential part of who he was and what he did. Jesus had to MAKE time by waking up before everyone else to find a place to be alone.

The same is true of each one of us. The way we live out our lives is largely determined by our dedication to spending time with God each day. We get swamped with work/school/family so quickly. We have to be intentional in MAKING daily time to find a secluded place and pray.

There is something pretty funny that happens in Mark 1 as Jesus is alone praying; his disciples are searching for him. There was more work to be done! Take the moments you find daily to pray, read scripture and reflect on the presence of God in your life, because there is sure to be something demanding your time and attention soon!

What takes you away from daily time with God?

What are ways you can intentionally MAKE time, even small amounts of time, to spend in prayer, study, and reflection?

g_editorial by Mike Reynolds

The greatest form of humility is the humility that it takes to believe God.

Humility is the ability to acknowledge where greatness comes from.

Anything that we believe about ourselves or others that opposes or undermines what God says is an enemy of true humility. The saints of God have believed a few lesser titles that God has not given us, these titles oppose God's word.

Whatever titles we take on ourselves either undermine Christians growth or advance it. Weak, sinner, sinful, or whatever else, these words can just be eradicated from our thoughts and speech about ourselves and towards others who believe in Jesus.

[I pray] that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His vast strength.
–Ephesians 1:18-19

The eyes of our heart must be enlightened to know what is the hope of his calling, the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints, and what immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe.

What is the hope of his calling? What are the glorious riches of His inheritance? What is the immeasurable greatness of His power?

God wanted to make known to those among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

This is the whole point: Christ is in you. You are one with Him, joined with Him, tied to Him. What we say about ourselves shouldn't vary from what you would say about Him. Obviously He is redeemer, we are not, but through the redemption we have been joined with Him so that As He is so are we in the world (1 John 4:17)). He went to the cross for us to be accepted by God as He is accepted by God, rose from the dead to give us new life that has access to God. If you believe then don't accept any title you wouldn't give to Jesus Himself.

Through faith in Jesus you are Children of God (Galatians 3:26), Complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10), Friends of God (John 15:15), Equipped with the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:3-4), Acceptable to God (Romans 14:18), Alive to God (Romans 6:11). Is He a liar?

Mike Reynolds, guitarist, For Today.

Roots & Culture

Allan Aguirre

of Olive Trees & Wild Branches (Part 2)

In Part 1 I shared my Punk Rock history, (which also includes Alternative, a category once used to delineate music outside the mainstream), my frustration with genre hybrids and musical counterfeits, and how time has buried the essence of both Punk and Alternative deep below the sands of conjecture and opinion.

I stated that this same "disregard" for authenticity can be applied to our faith and how centuries' worth of theological and doctrinal hybrids and counterfeits characterize our faith today. I suggested that time and culture have buried the essence of our faith deep below the sands of conjecture and opinion. A faith, once synonymous with a specific Root and Culture (much like the Ramones or the Sex Pistols defined Punk Rock), has given way to roots and culture seeped in hybrid manifestations much like Dave Matthews' "Alternative" genre categorization – a far cry from Bauhaus or Siouxsie and the Banshees, artists that birthed the genre.

The same must be said of our faith.

In Acts 24:14, Paul, in defense of his faith, states: "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." (NKJV) Christianity, the Way, was considered a sect of Judaism that included the belief of "all things which are written in the Torah ('law') of Moses." It is on this original definition of Christianity that I propose that:

- Scripturally, this "Way"
  - o was to the Jew first and then the gentile
  - o was taught, modeled and embodied by Jesus, the Jewish Messiah
  - o was followed by Paul and the original disciples
  - o is intended to be practiced and rooted in 'all things which are written in the Torah of Moses and in the Prophets', and that
- 1900 years of Greek and Roman linear thought processes of a Jewish cyclical concept have buried the biblical roots and essence of our faith deep below the sands of conjecture and opinion

Our understanding and application of the biblical roots of our faith would breathe new sound scriptural Life into the Covenant relationship bought for us with the shed Blood of the Lamb.

Romans 11 establishes this root system, our role as wild olive branches, and our responsibilities as branches grafted into the cultivated Olive Tree of the House of Israel.

"…don't boast as if you were better than the branches (Jews)! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root (Israel), the root is supporting you. So you (gentiles) will say, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' True, but so what? They were broken off because of their lack of trust (Jesus). However, you keep your place only because of your trust. So don't be arrogant; on the contrary, be terrified! For if God did not spare the natural branches, he certainly won't spare you! So take a good look at God's kindness and his severity: on the one hand, severity toward those who fell off; but, on the other hand, God's kindness toward you – provided you maintain yourself in that kindness! Otherwise, you too will be cut off!" Romans 11:18-22

Paul continues, "… you had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Israel. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. You were in this world without hope and without God. But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood." Ephesians 2:12-13 (emphasis mine)

[fb: allanAguirre]

Guest editorial by Chad Johnson

WORRIED AND UPSET

As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what He taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10: 38-42, NLT)

Here is this Mary VS. Martha paradigm. Some say, "I'm a Martha," or others boast, "I'm a Mary," especially as it pertains to relational proximity to Jesus. The first thing we should not do is imply that God's love – manifested through Jesus – was directionally aimed more at Mary than it was at Martha. This is not what the passage says. Jesus does not say that He loves Mary more (or less) than Martha. It's sometimes easy when we experience those great Mary days of spiritual life. Those days where we "feel" ever near to the beating heart of Jesus, where we know we are loved and we are His beloved, to allow (if we're not careful) a bit of pride to creep in. Pride creeps when we perceive our value as a little extra special, loved just a bit more than some … maybe most. This is sad and dangerous. Prideful thoughts imply that those believed to be further from God are less loved. Nothing could be farther from the truth. WE are loved. ALL of us collectively loved. "For God so loved the WHOLE world … that He gave His only Son", right? Simple love that we would simply love. Our feelings or perceptions of others can be weapons of untold danger if not aligned to the good will of God. Let's love!

Mary personalities ought to be aware of how pride loves to hang around, especially in the area of comparing our spiritual journeys with others. Martha personalities ought to be aware of how envy trips us. The truth is that we can't all be the hands and we can't all be the feet. Collectively, we are the Body! Each member making up his or her part of Christ's bride. It should liberate us to know that God has made each of us unique, special, set apart – for tasks and works that bring great glory to His name. This does not mean that we ought all to be in identical mission fields, passions or work environments. The world is wide and the Gospel was always designed with global in mind. Our personalities were made unique to occupy every corner of this globe with a representation of the kingdom.

Disclaimer aside, there is a clear lesson to learn with Mary & Martha, one that could even change our Christian walk.

Martha welcomed Jesus in. Without her, Mary would not have had this opportunity of proximity with the King. Martha was on a first-name basis with Jesus, even-though she became more concerned that Jesus would set her sister straight. It's incredibly important to realize that Jesus treats Martha with dignity and warmth – all the while pointing out her distracting fault. Jesus knew how to confront in love, bringing attention to the need for change, without killing dignity (Exception: Teachers of the Law). Martha's concern was cooking. Preparing. Treating Jesus to a wonderful meal. Having her sister step away from Jesus, returning to hosting duties. I wonder if much of the western/American church might be doing the same to those coming too close to the Christ. Our own insecurities, lack of faith, envy, or shallow intimacy with the Christ, can be conveyed as condemnation towards those willing and desiring to take bold love risks for and with Jesus. Where the church, or any believer, operates on fear – opposition to a Spirit of liberty is likely lurking.

One of the ways God spoke to me about fear was in November of 2008. I had recently put in my notice with Tooth & Nail and knew I was going into full-time ministry. I had recently purchased a home in Nashville (on T&N – not missionary salary) and fixed it up (with credit cards – not cash). My first thought? What a fool I am. Why did I buy a home when we could have just rented? Why did I use plastic debt to fix it with? You Fool! Condemnation closes in quickly. I determined to solve my problems. I would sell the house and be done with it. We could downgrade to a tiny rental somewhere. I quickly began work on the home. In that first day of working to prep the home for sale (Martha) I heard (Mary) the still small voice of the Lord. This is what He said; "If you sell your house, or make any move based on fear, I will not honor it." Ouch. He then reminded me to trust Him. I put down my tools and slowly went to work on trusting Jesus. It's been a long, rarely easy road, but it's now been 27 months of watching God provide for our home and living situation. He is trustworthy. A house is a house. The value is not in the keeping of a possession amidst a risky move to trust God, but in the willingness to go when God tells us to, regardless of what might be in the way.

Mary chose the better portion. She neglected common, practical house-hold duties, favoring instead the opportunity to be nearer to Jesus. To sit at His feet, hanging on the Words He spoke. Martha welcomed Him in and desired to provide for His earthly needs. We ought not underplay the practical. The premium, however, is in discovering a world of intimacy with the Savior. Forever and ever. A conversation with Him Who is seated on the right hand of God and on the throne of every believer's heart. Let's go after Him with everything. He deserves our time. He is worth burning a meal over. When He comes to visit you in your day, make space for Him. Stop what you are doing, hang up your chores or your priorities, and get time with the Eternal One. He desires a relationship. A two-way street. Speaking and hearing. Give heed to His voice.

Our culture is mostly rooted and founded on the notion that our days must be jam-packed with an assortment of functions, events, opportunities, requirements, all in an effort to feel good about who we are. We make a terrible mistake when our assumption is serving Jesus best by checking every task off our list. Jesus does desire to dine with us. Revelation 3:20 says so. But He wants us to be MOST concerned about hearing His voice, spending time with Him, loving not the things of the world but His every word.

If you are having a hard time "hearing" from God, spending daily time in His Word and believing His promises of love – we would like to pray this prayer over you:

Heavenly Father, dear King and friend Jesus, please speak to each of Your children and open their ears to hear. Your sheep know Your voice. Teach us to hear. Teach us to spend time with you. Help each of us to wake up earlier or stay up later, just to talk with You. Forgive us for caring more about the concerns of this world than eternally valuable time with You. Speak and we will listen. Teach us to be still and know that You are God. We pray for opportunities this week to be Your hands and feet. To love You and others with a burning zeal that cannot be easily quenched. More of You in each of these readers. More boldness, more courage, more faith, more love, more joy. Rejoicing always! Help us to drop our worries and to stop being upset by the ways in which You seek to disrupt our schedules and our routines. Take us deeper. Bring us higher. We want You!

—Chad Johnson

New Zealand {Our Story} | A Come&Live! Documentary
Available now as a Vimeo Stream or Free Download.

WHITE, COLD MICHIGAN WINTER

"There's too many things to consider," Matt thought as he lowered the barbell to his chest, "too many variables. Every person is different; and then when you allow for things like brain chemistry – and the allowance that brain chemistry could have changed dramatically in the past two thousand years. I mean, this was before there was smog or pollution or every single food item has been processed and pasteurized and zapped with artificials – gaaaahhhhhh!!!" Matt reached the finite point where he could no longer think. Instead, he gave a final exhale to extend the barbell to arm's length where it would lay to rest on the bench's framework. He lay still on the small shape of the bench's pad surface for a moment. It did not encompass his whole frame, and he was small and awkward for his age at 17. Finally, he tucked in his chest and swung his legs around to meet him at the ground.

The local family Y center was his sanctuary three days a week. It wasn't that Matt cared particularly about health, although he did have a recent obsession with Bruce Lee and Bruce Lee cared about health (and dragons). It was more identity, and hoping that he could a.) counter the effects of his family's metabolism early. For the time being he was peaking from his final growth spurt and his limbs took on a refugee quality. But he saw his genes in full effect thanks to his father and older brother, three years his senior. It didn't give him much to look forward to. At least he peaked out at slightly taller than his brother, which was a whole 5 inches taller than his dad. And b.) help him fill out his rather awkward, domineering Adam's apple. Maybe he could bulk up his shoulders and chest. Now he looked like an amalgamation; Hanna-Barbara gorilla arms on a body so lacking of shape his chest was actually concave. It was like if E.T. had liposuction. Of course, everything else about his genetics (i.e. things beyond his control) seemed to hate him; his complexion gave new meaning to the term pizza-face, and top that all off with a mild case of near-sightedness – just enough to require the use of corrective lenses that sat on his head at an odd angle thanks to falling asleep while watching TV with them on his face.

"How can there be a single solution? An end-all road map? How can people be so naive to think that happiness comes from one single place?" Matt glanced out the floor-to-ceiling windows that formed the west wall of the weight/cardio room as he gathered some add-on weights, two five-pounders for either end. Outside the sky was pale gray as if devoid of personality, threatening to turn to pitch black within the next half hour; it was 4:30 after all. The roads were covered in a gray-brown sludge, a mix of salt, dirty snow and engine fluids that masked the asphalt from November to sometime in April. The ground had a few inches of gray-white snow settled. Typically after the first few snowfalls, the ground stayed infested in the powdery material that eventually grew brittle and sharp. The days never warmed to the point of melting and the nights were long and below freezing. Matt scoffed. He hated how snow was marketed to him, phrases like "winter wonderland" and images of serene countrysides blanketed in white like a cozy-wool blanket, people sipping hot cocoa around the fireplace like the entire winter season – stealing a third of Michigan's year round climate – was something to be celebrated and not just gotten through. His thoughts drifted, "For instance, you could live in California or Florida or some golden coast somewhere warm and decent. Then, despite all your problems, you could at least walk outside; you could enjoy the outdoors rather than being slapped in the face with a wind chill. Living in Michigan isn't the cause of my problems, but it certainly compounds the effects. So how can there be a single solution?"

Strange, some people seemed to have it all together so naturally – bone structure, skin complexion, being born into middle-upper class, actually having things to say. Matt seemed to lack most qualities sought after by most human beings. But he believed in a creator God that functioned beyond the realm of chance. Yet with the billions of humans on the earth currently and the billions since Adam and Eve, how could God really give specific attention and detail to each one? There had to be some random design to it, right? Like a slot machine, and you pull the lever, and usually it balances out. Well, this one is normal height but has an abnormally large nose but pretty good complexion but with a slight speech impediment; this one is going to be overweight but have a good sense of humor (everyone loves the funny fat guy who can turn jokes about his weight); this one is going to be tall and handsome but with a lower IQ (great for high school sports); etc. etc.

It evens out, God? Doesn't it? Did you really design my Adam's apple specifically (and trigonomically)? Did you really give me a nose (beak) that people will ask if I broke it when I was younger when that has never been the case? I'm assuming you maybe passed off on the final design but didn't actually craft the specifics ... maybe you threw in an abnormally high white blood count to stave off disease or an appendix that wouldn't burst to offset my genetic ugliness, something...

"You can't just ... deny depression exists because it's unholy. Because your two thousand year old Rabbi didn't address it. I agree that love and hope and all that is better. I wonder what the climate was in Bethlehem. I wonder if it was frickin' freezing out even in the day. They didn't have high school, I know that much. They didn't lock you in giant, bland classrooms together when kids are the meanest and most judgmental and when your skin consequently is greasy and most volatile. It's like, thirty little bulbous targets sprouting out on my face. Of course I'm not happy, and if not being happy is a sin, well we already knew I was a sinner."

Matt got out to his car and fumbled for his keys. His hair was still wet, but he wasn't cold; his body was still coming down from the workout. Sliding into his '94 Plymouth Acclaim's burgundy interior, Matt threw his soiled clothing in a plastic shopping bag into the back seat. He turned on the ignition and reached for his personal CD player that rested on the floorboard. He put the DC power adapter into the cigarette lighter and hit play. The CD came to life, spinning inside the blue-clear top plate that seemed futuristic when Matt received it as a gift three years prior. The signal traveled through the cassette player and over the adapter, flooding out of 3 of the 4 car speakers (his front left rattled and fuzzed, so he panned it away):

"Yesterday, another way / Things would work out, they'd be okay
Well I used to be okay / In the hands of yesterday / The darkness came in fast /
This feeling wouldn't last... Now I'm alone I don't even know / What I'm living for,
what to call my home / Is it all a dream, or deadly scheme / Just a big mistake and I
can't explain what's happening to me"

The words flooded over Matt like anesthesia through an IV; instantly flooding his inner self with warmth and validation. He was right, he had to be right; now someone, somewhere, was singing his problems back to him. It didn't offer him a solution, but it did offer him solace in inclusion. A few years ago, a boy named Ryan Sheely felt similar feelings. They were misunderstood and alone, but they were right; an entire high school (albeit an abnormally small, back country high school of only three hundred) couldn't convince him otherwise.

Words are simple. They form phrases and phrases contain ideas. Value Pac is not poetry. The words sound right, within their context, spurned out over distortion and with emphasis that gives them feeling. On the page they may read dead, trite even. They are not poetry. They do not exist apart from their delivery, with music, except on really old Christian punk lyric archives and now this article.

Matt drove home. It was 5:30, but it may well have been midnight. The sky was black, and the cold of day somehow deepened its icy grip. High school would be done soon, and then summer would come, and then college. College was a new beginning, a chance to actually study something of interest, to rise above the mediocrity prevailing around him with studies too basic to hold his interest. Depression wasn't recognized, maybe not universally in Christianity, maybe just in Independent Baptist churches or in pastor's families of said churches. Teenage angst. Giving the devil a foothold. Forsaking the joy of the Lord. What was it? Not a chemical imbalance. Not a natural feeling of hopelessness; it had to come from engaging the devil, from clearly turning one's back on the Lord and all the hope and joy He offered to every weary lamb at His altar equally.

The final track of the album came on, "Big Dream" – a track Matt always anticipated around the final 3/4ths of the album's playtime. When the disk stopped, he'd play it again. As the lyrics filled his car, Matt's mood lifted. Not poetry, but something better.

ask. seek. rock.

ASK A MENTOR, SEEK ADVICE, ROCK YOUR CAREER

BY RANDY SPENCER
randy@pitchmusic.com

"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

A fact of life (in addition to death and taxes) is rejection. The music business is filled with times of rejection and the artists that are persistent are the ones that survive long term. Whether you are pursuing a record deal, getting added to a music festival, trying to open a show for your favorite artist the likeliness of those things happening may be slim. There are over 14 million artists online promoting their music, many of them seeking the same opportunities that you are. There is not enough room for every record label, festival or tour date to say yes to every submission that they receive.

Receiving a record deal or getting the "big" opportunity does not validate your worth and it should not be your main motivation or objective. If those opportunities happen follow through and maximize the platform and thank God for opening the door for you. If they don't, make the most of the opportunities that are presented to you. Exposure is exposure whether big or small and you never know what may happen from an invitation to something. Build your fans one person at a time, network with the promoter and look at everything that you do, as a chance to grow and develop and have your music be better. Whether you are playing a large festival or a small venue, you can still impact people and offer them hope and encouragement. You don't have to have a record deal or be on a big tour to fulfill that "mission." God (who is in charge of our life and music career any way) is more than capable to change people's lives in ANY atmosphere. God is also amazingly capable of often surprising you with other opportunities, often in unexpected places (Jeremiah 29:11 and Ephesians 3:19-21).

Some of the most successful people in the world experienced failure prior to their success. Steve Jobs was fired from Apple before being re-hired and later revolutionizing the world. U2's first few albums hardly sold any records. Many well-known actors kept on acting in small movies before their break made them household names. Even in the midst of adversity, rejection or personal challenges we must keep focused on what God has called us to do. You must keep a belief and vision for your musical talent – you must keep moving! Keep writing, focus on networking, remain steady on making phone calls to promote your music – don't stay still! Staying idle will only diminish your chances of success and if you don't play that show, take that interview or show up at that conference; some one else will receive that opportunity (your dream).

I encourage each of you as you read this in the week ahead to keep on moving (2 Timothy 4:7, 8) – keep on networking, set goals and pursue reaching them. Please e-mail me and let us know your stories of moving ahead. I look forward to hearing them!

Randy Spencer has been in music publishing, management and A&R for over 20 years. He has represented artists such as Metallica bass player Jason Newsted, P.O.D. guitarist and songwriter Marcos Curiel, Stryper vocalist Michael Sweet, dc Talk vocalist Kevin Max and numerous other well known recording artists, songwriters and music producers. Say hello or ask for advice at randy@pitchmusic.com. Randy will answer questions in future articles.

DAVID CROWDER BAND

Photo: Doug Van Pelt

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

Photo: Christian-Brae Madsen

ROBERT RANDOLPH &THE FAMILY BAND

Photo: DVP

MANCHESTER ORCHESTRA

Photo: DVP

SWITCHFOOT

Photo: DVP

GREELEY ESTATES

Photo: Corey Erb

THE CHARIOT

photograph of unknown origin

photograph of unknown origin

photograph of unknown origin

photograph of unknown origin

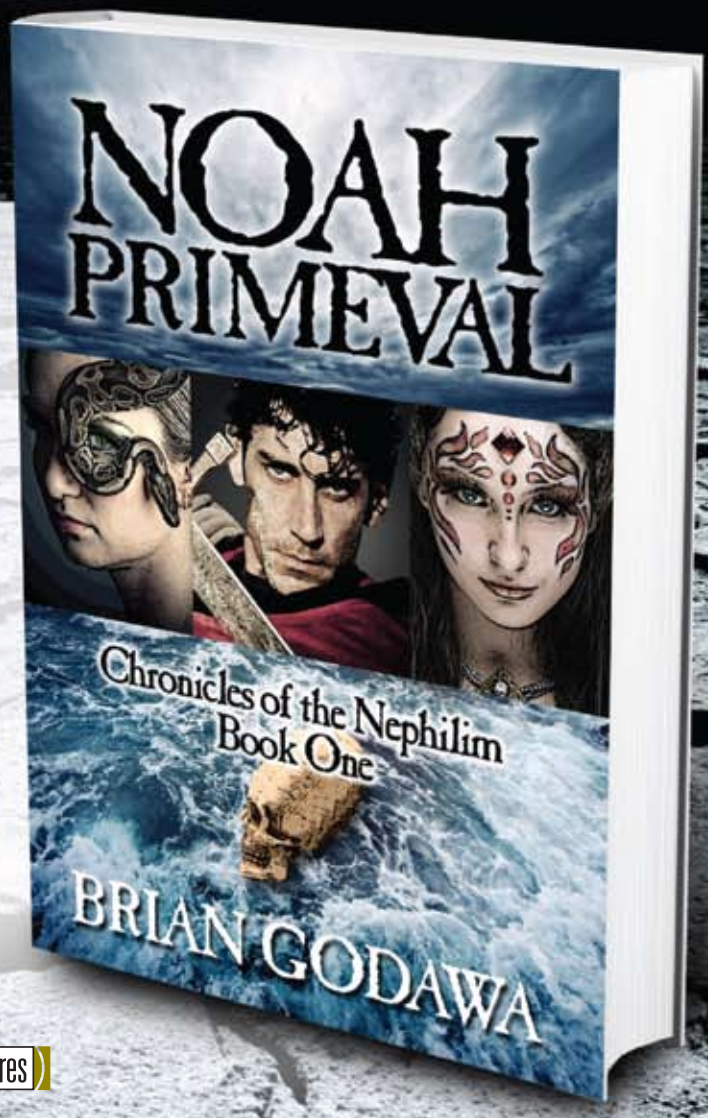
SKILLET

photograph of unknown origin

Did God Wipe Out a Race of Giants With the Flood?

Hollywood Screenwriter Pens Controversial Noah Novel

"Reads like a Blockbuster Movie!"
– Ralph Winter, Producer (*X-Men, Wolverine*)



In an ancient world of darkness, fallen angels breed giants and enslave mankind. Noah has been prophesied to save humanity from the coming destruction of this evil. But Noah's wife and son are captives of these dark forces – and he's not going anywhere without them.

Brian Godawa, award-winning Hollywood screenwriter of *To End All Wars* with Kiefer Sutherland, and author of the popular book, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment*, has combined his cinematic storytelling with his worldview insight into a fast-pased Biblical epic novel.

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Special appendixes provide the biblical research behind this imaginative interpretation of the Nephilim, the Sons of God, Leviathan and more!

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ROCK STARS ON GOD
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BY DOUG VAN PELT

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HM

HM Magazine, along with our readers, would like to say "THANK YOU" to **Haste the Day** for 10 amazing years.

God bless all of you guys...

ONE LAST LIVE REPORT

The last Haste the Day show in Texas

February 11

REVIEW BY ROB SHAMELESS PHOTOS BY DOUG VAN PELT

February 11th 2011 (Dallas, TX) Haste The Day "The Farewell Tour" was a bitter sweet night for a lot of us. Having three bands send off Haste The Day in a great fashion. A Plea For Purging, The Chariot, and My Children My Bride. All three bands who know how to bring "The Party."

There was a line that was around the block and fans where still pouring in as **A Plea For Purging** took the stage. This amazing band from the music city always puts on a great show. They played a great set with songs from their last two records including fan favorites "The Eternal Female" "Shiver," "Holocausts" and always ending with "Malevolence." With singer Andy Atkins calling for more head bangs. Along with calling out Matthew Hasting (singer of MCMB) to do a wall of death during their set. "We are all about the party," said Atkins, and do they ever know how to get a party started.

Up next was **The Chariot**. This band brings back the chaordic (chaos within order) punk rock show. With a paper cut out of their bass player Wolf, who was at a friend's wedding that night, the show did not skip a beat. Josh Scogin's calling Dallas his favorite city besides his home town Atlanta he opened the set with his opening line "They call us The Chariot, this song is called Back to Back," then a stage dive into the crowd. This band is never a disappointment. Every time I see them they always know how to take the show to the next level. At one point in the set guitarist Stephen Harrison played guitar in the crowd. Both band members and fans losing their minds. Fans jumping on stage for the end of "The City" and friends joining in on the drum circle at the end of "Daggers" with Plea's drummer Arron diving in the crowd while catching a tom tom. There are so many things to talk about, and so little time to talk about the craziness of The Chariot.

The party raged on when **MyChildren MyBride** took the stage. These boys always put a smile on my face. They know how to have a good time. With only two albums under their belt they play a great mix of new and old songs. While dedicating their new single "King of The Hopeless" to Texas straight edge and Texas hardcore, drummer Noah Boyce of Dallas' own hardcore band Messengers stage dived and threw up his X. In classic fashion the boys ended their set with "Headshot." They had a new headshot shirt for this tour that is a Shepard Fairey tribute to his breakout "Andre the giant has a posse" sticker.

At last we ended the night with the farewell of **Haste The Day**. This band with ten years behind them end on a great note. They had a surprise guest appearance by Micah Kinard of Oh, Sleeper on "The Place That Most Deny." Playing a wide arranged set from all five records, my personal favorites being the first two records... It was a great to see a band end on a good note. For me I'm glad when a band calls it a day when the time comes and it is the right thing to do. Most bands don't make it to ten years and to end it on that note is a good day by me. With hugs and tears from fans letting the band know how much they have meant in their life, it was over for us. Haste The Day will always be a band that we will look back on and will never forget.

All photos from the Austin, TX, show (obviously).

WE COMMISSIONED NICK AND MATTHEW [OF THIS MOMENT IN HARDCORE] TO SIT DOWN WITH THE **HASTE THE DAY** GUYS AT THE **RICHMOND, VA**, STOP ON THEIR FAREWELL TOUR. THEY CORNERED STEPHEN KEECH, MIKE MURPHY AND ORIGINAL GUITAR PLAYER BRENNAN CHAULK FOR THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION…

Right before seeing Haste the Day in Richmond, Virginia, we had the opportunity to go to dinner and do an epic interview for their farewell tour. It was one of the most emotional shows ever. We got to know them on a more personal level which made it just a little more sad to know that we would never hear their classic sound live again. Haste the Day has conquered the scene for ten years and written some of the most memorable songs ever to be released in the scene. We're going to miss them and we're going to miss their music. It's sad to see them go, especially because there aren't many bands like Haste left out there. Most of the bands that are around are because of inspirations like Haste the Day. We would just like to thank them for all of their hard work, endless hours of touring and recording, and for all the great music they've made over the years. Here are the final words and thoughts of Haste the Day before they bid farewell.

Nick: So, recap why the band is breaking up for those who didn't read it on the site.
Mike: It's not one specific reason. We felt like Haste the Day had done what we set out to do in the beginning which was to make awesome music and spread hope in the hardcore scene. We felt that we put out our best record with *Attack of the Wolf King* and we didn't really want to follow it up. I mean I'm getting older and I don't really want to headbang anymore. We still love Haste the Day and still love playing heavy music, but I personally felt my passion kind of going away and I didn't want to go on auto pilot and keep going just for the sake of going. I still love heavy music, but my passion for touring is drying up. It's harder being away and the scene is generally different from when we started playing. I feel that this season of my life is ending and this feels right.

Matt: Any regrets that you guys have had for the past ten years? What has Haste the Day done wrong that you wish you hadn't?
Brennan: My biggest regret was how I left. I left in the middle of tour. I was getting married and I jumped out. It definitely threw off the tour and I wish that I had done that differently.

Nick: Any lessons you'd want to pass on to other bands?
Mike: Play anywhere you can. We played birthday parties, attics and basements. Take every opportunity you can to play. We've played for, like, five people before, but we're not above that. Go out and play everywhere you can.

Steve: I remember my first band played a graduation party and it was probably the most awkward experience of our lives. There were, like, three kids who wanted to hear the music and then a ton of old people who seemed really bummed that they were there. The mom gave us two hundred dollars, but then we returned (it) in secret because we didn't feel like we earned it.

Matt: What is something about HTD that fans don't know unless they ask you?
Brennan: We're a Christian band!

Matt: Wow. Shocking!

Mike: Okay. So when Brennan was in the band his vocals were tracked on the albums.

Steve: Actually in the studio I sang all of his parts.

Nick: Do you guys have any plans for another band after this?
Steve: I want to do a lot of chill stuff. Like one day I woke up and I realized I wasn't really angry anymore. I was on stage one night yelling at these kids and they were yelling back at me and I was like, "I am NOT mad at you! I don't understand why we're so angry right now!" It really gave me a passion to play more happy go-lucky music. I've been writing music like that since before I started playing heavy music. It's very Beatles inspired.

Matt: What was your favorite album you wrote and what influenced the sound at that time?
Steve: *Attack of the Wolf King*. The thing that made that album so great is that there were five different influences! We pulled those things all together and the album came out perfect. It was heavy and atmospheric. It flowed and came out wonderfully.

Brennan: As a fan I agree it really was the best album. It's different from what Haste usually does, but it's still got the Haste the Day flare. I know that I wasn't excited to love it, but it truly was a brilliant album.

Nick: What's it like being on tour with secular bands? Does it raise any conflict?
Steve: I feel like it's the same. People are people. You can have the same problem touring with a Christian band as touring with a secular band. There are Christian bands out there, unfortunately that are no different than secular bands. It's just a label to sell records. I'm not saying that all Christian bands are bad, but there isn't really much of a difference. Some of our best friends are not Christians and I think that *that's* where our ministry lies. I believe that we should inform these people to what we believe. We believe in God and trust in the Holy Spirit and we hope that through those relationships we can be there for them. We hope that God would move on their hearts.

Matt: You recently did a reunion show where you also recorded a DVD in your hometown tell us how that went.
Mike: It was really fun. We played almost two hours. It was one of the craziest shows I'd ever been to. The crowd was singing along to parts that we had never heard them sing to before. There were tons of people from all around the US coming to see this show. Before the show we all got together and prayed and we just had a good fellowship.

Steve: It felt like we were more than a band. It felt like we were part of something incredible. It was humbling and just awesome. After the show there were kids just lined up crying. It was one of the most emotional nights of my life. There were actually kids that told us that Haste the Day changed their lives and some that even said Haste saved their lives! I know that it's not Haste the Day that saves lives, it's Christ moving through the music. We're just another hardcore band, but God takes that and uses that to change lives.

Matt: Mike, you've been in the band since the beginning. Do you feel Haste has changed? If so, was it for good or bad and how so?
Mike: Yeah it's definitely changed. Not being around the same group of guys is different. But the purpose of Haste the Day has always been the same. I guess the biggest thing is that through the member changes and overcoming the challenges has forced me to grow up and not find my identity in others, but in Christ and who He wants me to be. You have to step out of your comfort zone and you have to rely on the Lord. As far as style goes we started out pretty hardcore, but it became more melodic. When Stephen joined the band got darker and more ambient. The evolution from our EP to *Attack of the Wolf King* is perfect to me, because it took all the good parts of all the records and made it all make sense on the last record.

Nick: What is the weirdest thing you've ever seen on tour?
Brennan: Not appropriate.

Nick: Second weirdest?
Brennan: Not even close to appropriate.

Nick: Tenth weirdest?
Mike: Well, on this tour I've seen a banana stage dive and Spongebob stage dive … all in one night.

Stephen: On the road you see a lot of weird things, both appropriate and inappropriate.

Mike: I'll say this and leave it at this. You don't always have time to make a bathroom stop...
(Everyone goes eeeeeeeeewwwwwwwww)

Nick: Tell us something you'll never forget while being in Haste the Day. Is this appropriate?
Stephen: well there are still a lot of things going on in my mind that I will NEVER forget.

Mike: I'll never forget when we first started touring and we played an out of state show and people started singing along to one of our songs. It was pretty mind blowing. Or when we got our first t-shirt; we had won battle of the bands in high school and we got our t-shirts made. It said Haste the Day in cursive with roses under it. And, of course, I'll never forget going international. Hearing kids sing your songs in a different language is kinda amazing.

Matt: A lot of members have left the band over the years, where are they now?
Brennan: I'm here. My brother Devon is a senior pastor in Indiana. Jimmy is in Trenches and works for a church as well. I'm serving tables at a restaurant called The Melting Pot, so I make a lot of cheese and just work out a lot.

Mike: That's a joke. Put lol after that.

Matt: Working out at 25-hour fitness!

Mike: 25-hour cheeseburger fitness. Print it!

Nick: Done and done!
Brennan: Jason was in the band for a while. He's a bartender in Indianapolis now.

Mike: And we're all still really good friends.

Stephen: Except that Jimmy and I still hate each other.

Nick: Really?
Stephen: Joke. We like to joke about that. Jimmy and I love each other.

Nick: What are your thoughts on Jimmy's band, Trenches?
Mike: It's cool stuff. They put out the one record and that's all they've really done. I think Jimmy just needed an outlet. The music is kinda like Isis and Deftones-y influenced.

Stephen: It's like if you took a Haste the Day record and put it on vinyl and slowed it down to like half – that would be Trenches. It's super boring and we hate it… That's a joke.

Nick: As of right now, do you guys have any plans for a reunion show?

Mike: It's December 1st 2027. I am for real. It's in Indiana. Stephen will not be there. We're gonna track Brennan's vocals again and I'm going to be the only one there. This is a joke. There is no reunion show as of right now. Little early to say!

Matt: Well, if you did do one, who would you want to play with?
Mike: Living Sacrifice reunion, Zao reunion, Beloved reunion, Still Remains reunion, and Slick Shoes. I say reunion because all of these bands will be broken up by December 1st 2027. Actually, speaking of Still Remains, they will be playing a reunion show at our very last show in Indianapolis, so that's pretty awesome.

Matt: How has Solid State treated you over the years?
Mike: Excellent. It was our dream label since we were kids. We loved Solid State and we'd buy every release that came out no matter what came out! It was the dream label and everyone treated us so well. It's a solid label that stands for solid things… it's SOLID state. I didn't even mean to do that. They were a wonderful family to us.

Matt: What are some heartfelt emotions/messages that you'd like to tell the fans?
Mike: We're so thankful for our fans. It's an honor for someone (to) let you be a part of their life. Growing up listening to bands ... I idolized bands. Their songs become the soundtrack to that time of my life when something was hard. To create music and to be a part of someone's life like that is an honor and we don't take that for granted. It's a big deal and we appreciate them as people. We love them deeply and genuinely and it's been an honor to write this music. Thank you fans for all of the wonderful support.

Matt: Well to wrap this up how can we pray for you?
Brennan: Direction. I've been out of the band for a few years now and I'm still waiting to see where God's gonna put me next. I think that's the prayer for everybody in the band.

Mike: Same thing. My mom always said when I first started touring she was always worried that when it was over, would I be able to be a "normal" guy.

Stephen: I think it is gonna be weird trying to adapt to normal society. We all need direction and patience in waiting to hear God's voice. We need to keep in tune to God's voice so we don't grow dry or stagnant.

Nick: Any last messages that you want published for HM?
Mike: We would like to say that Stephen is a million times better at vocals than Jimmy. LOVE YA JIMMY! PRINT THAT!

✖

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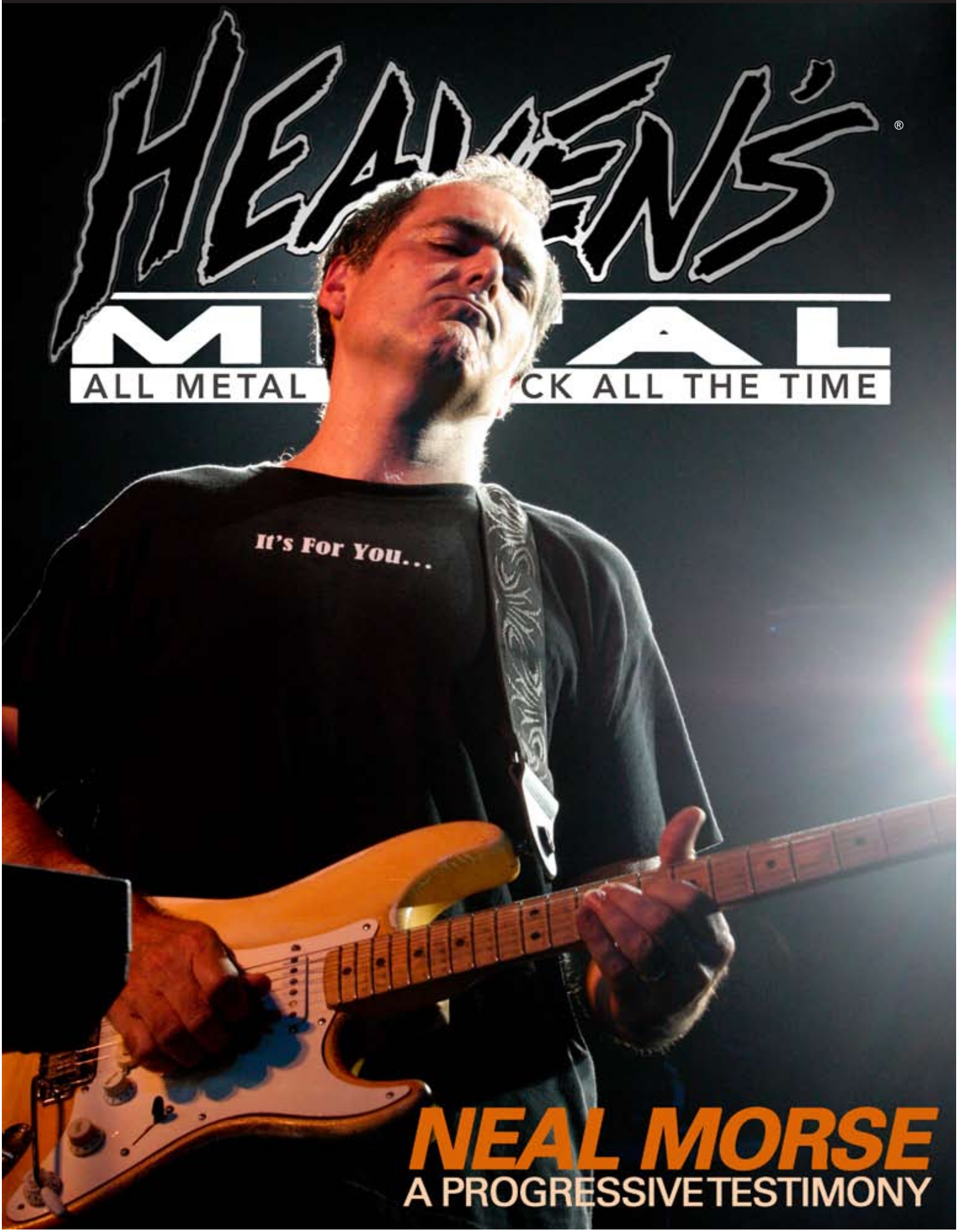

CROSSFORCE | Where are they now?

BY KEVEN CROTHERS

WHEN THE NAMES OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CHRISTIAN METAL ACTS ARE DISCUSSED IT IS WITH MUCH REGRET THAT THE NAME CROSSFORCE DOESN'T GET MENTIONED. YOU YOURSELF MIGHT BE THINKING, "WHO? I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THEM." THAT REALLY IS TOO BAD BECAUSE THERE ARE ONLY A HANDFUL OF ARTISTS WHO WROTE SONGS THAT HAVE A TIMELESS APPEAL – MELODIES AND LYRICS THAT HAVE DEPTH AND APPEAL BEYOND THEIR ORIGINAL CONCEPTION, WHICH IS CALLED STAYING POWER. IT WAS TRAGIC THAT CROSSFORCE WERE NEVER SIGNED TO ONE OF THE MAJOR CHRISTIAN LABELS CONSIDERING THE AMOUNT OF TRIPE THAT WAS RELEASED IN THE 1980'S.

In late 2009 a bug was placed in the ear of Roxx Productions owner Bill Bafford about releasing the demo material that Crossforce had accumulated, much of it never before heard. He liked the idea but with other artists already in the pipeline, Crossforce would have to wait. Well, that waiting finally came to fruition with the 2011 release, Crossforce – *Rockin Til The Final Day*. This long awaited release contained their original six song demo that was made available in early 1987. However, unknown to many, there was a seven song "live in the studio" recording made for Jimmy Kempner of Frontline Records. These additional seven songs make up the bulk of this release.

With this release it was time to speak again with lead guitarist, and one of Crossforce's founding members, Phil Castillo. Over the course of our conversation we covered a lot of ground, but as we discussed how Phil connected with lead vocalist Tony Crider, he had a gleam in his eye as he shared, "I was living in San Jose and attending college when I got a call from Tony Crider who was forming a new band after leaving Golgotha. Tony had heard word on the street about me when I was in a band called Revelation. I'd heard and seen Golgotha a couple times but I never personally met him. He asked if I'd come down and jam with he and Jeff Hudson. They had some tunes put together and were playing to a drum machine. I brought my guitar and a bozo little practice amp and it clicked. I loved their boldness in the faith too."

It was an amazing time in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1987, thrash had exploded but so had glam and blues based hard rock. Crossforce made their mark as well and Phil had quite a bit of recollection in this regard. "It was a very exciting time. The music scene in the Bay Area was so vibrant. Tons of cool Christian Bands and secular acts like Forbidden Evil, Testament, Metallica, etc., were making their mark too and following in the great tradition of other great local acts since the 1960's like Jefferson Airplane, Doobie Bros, Santana, Journey, Montrose, just to name a few." Thoughtfully he continued, "Metallica practiced in the same rehearsal spot as Crossforce and it was sad to see them come back right after Cliff Burton died. They were pretty bummed. Incidentally, they were the quietest band in there which I found interesting. They practiced at such a low volume while Crossforce was shaking the walls. Metallica were the smart ones since they probably kept their hearing.

Believer and Valor were great bands and great brothers in the Lord. I remember the first time I saw Soldier. That was awesome. Those guys were so good and punchy. Mark (Soldiers bass player) was my fashion guru. I always dressed like a dork and Mark had an eye for fashion and would get me fixed up. Jimmy would smoke on the vocals and Rick Martinez would shred. I had nice gear but not much of it cuz I was always broke. Rick had a good job and thus had rows of guitars and amps. Watching a Soldier show was like hanging out at Guitar Center, it was awesome, total gear-fest. Rick is one of the sweetest guys too. Very humble, down to earth and easy to talk to. I went to most of their shows."

Castillo continued, "I remember we went to one of the more popular clubs right in the heart of San Francisco called Mabuhay Gardens on Broadway and asked if they would book a show with Soldier, Believer and Crossforce. The owner was like, 'Yeah right, like I'm gonna book a bunch of Christian Momma's boys that might get 10 people to the show.' The club took a chance and we packed that place with hundreds of people. After that the club owner would book us in prime slots and we'd pack it every time. We'd rock it so hard and I'd sweat buckets, the energy was through the roof."

With the passing of lead vocalist Tony Crider in 2002 (bass player Jeff Hudson passed away in 2009) it's questionable if he was aware of the impact his music had on the listeners. As Phil and I discussed their relationship he had this to say, "Folks said Tony and I had the Plant/Page or Tyler/Perry chemistry thing going. We were just always writing together and we fed off each other's creativity. Jeff Hudson would also write from time to time and he was really good. Tony was an incredibly talented musician. We recorded so much material together on cassettes that we never had enough time to work it all out with the band. I'd imagine those cassettes probably lie on the bottom of one of Tony's old dressers all these years later. His brain never stopped, which was probably his undoing. He got to the end way to fast. I would throw out some weird riff and groove and he could always pull out a killer melody with amazing lyrics. Most people only saw Tony play guitar and don't know that he was an accomplished piano player too. Some of my fonder memories were just hanging out at Tony's house and he'd get on the piano and play all these old gospel tunes, Bach

hymns, Elton John and such. I'd put my guitar down and just watch him play and sing for awhile. He was so good, I really miss him."

However, as many things do, they come to an end and in 1988 Phil left Crossforce. When asked why he had this to say, "I can't remember when but I left when Tony lost confidence in himself and probably with the band too. He was a great singer with his own sound but he never really believed it. He was disappointed that he didn't have a high alto voice like most of the singers of the 80's, he was a natural tenor. I loved his voice, plus it made us different from everybody else. Unfortunately, Tony wasn't buying it, very sad."

Sometime after Crossforce Tony and Phil reunited, albeit briefly, in a new band called Mercy. Mercy never had an official release for public consumption however with this Roxx release Bill was able to put together seven unreleased Mercy tracks as a special limited edition bonus disc. Phil had this to say about his brief reunion with Tony, "I thought Tony had worked out his confidence issues but after awhile he started struggling with personal issues and his musical direction kept shifting. Who knows, maybe musically I just couldn't keep up?"

When quizzed about his most memorable moments in Crossforce Phil added, "The Mabuhay Garden Shows. We played other bigger venues and to larger audiences but Mabuhay just had the vibe. Soldier would usually finish off the night, so after we played I'd just join in with the audience and push my way to the front, sweat some more and rock out. Soldier was fun and had a fierce sound, way too much fun!"

There were many shows Crossforce appeared at from Metal Mardi Gras in 1987 to their own HIS Festival appearance in 1988. Not to mention, Crossforce shared the Bay Area stage with Barren Cross, Whitecross, Guardian, Bloodgood and last but not least Deliverance (way back in 1987 before they were even signed!).

When discussing post Crossforce and Mercy music he had this to say, "I put the guitar down for a couple of years, reassessed what direction God wanted me to go. I cut off my hair, studied and got my securities (stock and bonds) license and went to work in the financial sector setting up pension accounts. I joined my father's company a couple of years later and moved to San Diego. I eventually started playing again and got in a band that would become Krush. We put out a couple albums and toured some. We would play some really heavy stuff." [For this writer it's with great regret that I must admit I've never heard Krush, sigh. Can't win 'em all.]

Our conversation continued as we conversed about what he's involved in currently on the musical side. "I moved to Nashville, TN seven years ago and play in Jessica Miller's Band. I also play with some local acts and on my church worship team. When I'm not scheduled to play worship I, along with my wife and kids, will visit some other churches. I get a kick seeing who's playing at some of the other churches around town. So many of the worship bands have professional musicians who get paid a lot of money to play but do it free for their churches. Even Kix Brooks (Brooks & Dunn) leads worship sometimes in his little church of 70 people. I like popping my head into Christ Community in Franklin from time to time to see Glen Pierce play. He's one of my favorite guitar players with a huge big act studio and touring resume and he just sits up there looking like he's half asleep and homeless, yet sounding amazing."

Hopefully you've gotten a little bit more insight into Crossforce through this piece. Phil had this to say in closing, "The Lord has opened up some opportunities for me in talk radio. I co-host a live call-in show on the weekends called One Nation Under God (onenationundergodradio.com) on Supertalk 99.7 WTN, which is the largest talk station in Nashville. We discuss politics and culture from a biblical perspective with the understanding that one's religion, or lack thereof, is the largest determiner one's politics. The show is top-rated in our time slot and the station is looking for opportunities to move us into weekday programming so I appreciate everyone's prayers for God's grace. I'm pretty much way over my head on the whole deal.

I'm also very appreciative of Roxx releasing old Crossforce material. The support and reaction is great. Like all musicians, I look back at that body of work and cringe at some of my playing (what was I thinking?) but it also confirms that Crossforce was special. We really had some great songs and special moments in there. Crossforce had a life and sound all to itself." *Rocking Til The Final Day* is available on Roxx Productions.

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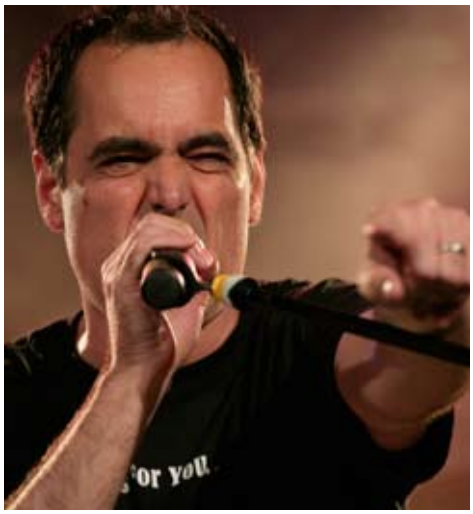
Neal Morse | One Man, Many Projects,

ONE OF THE BUSIEST MUSICIAN/SINGER/SONGWRITERS WORKING TODAY, I AM SURPRISED NEAL MORSE FINDS TIME TO SLEEP. FIRST MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF THROUGH MANY GREAT RECORDINGS AT THE HELM OF SPOCK'S BEARD, AND EVEN FINDING TIME TO DO A COUPLE SOLO ROCK ALBUMS DURING THAT TIME. IN 1999 HE BECAME PART OF A "SUPER GROUP" WHEN HE TEAMED UP WITH DRUMMER MIKE PORTNOY (DREAM THEATER), GUITARIST ROINE STOLT (FLOWER KINGS) AND BASSIST PETE TREWAVAS (MARILLION) TO FORM THE MEGA-AMAZING PROG BAND TRANSATLANTIC, RELEASING QUITE A BIT OF EXCELLENT STUDIO AND LIVE MATERIAL. THEN, IN 2002 HE LEFT BOTH BANDS TO PURSUE A SOLO CHRISTIAN MUSIC CAREER, AND IN 2003 RELEASED HIS FIRST CHRISTIAN ALBUM, *TESTIMONY*, WHICH TOLD HIS SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN A BIOGRAPHICAL TWO-DISC AMAZING MUSICAL EXPERIENCE. ALSO IN 2003, HE JOINED WITH MIKE PORTNOY, PAUL GILBERT AND MATT BISSONETTE TO DO A FEW SHOWS LATER RELEASED ON CD AND DVD AS YELLOW MATTER CUSTARD, A BEATLES TRIBUTE BAND. NEVER ONE TO SLOW DOWN, HE FOLLOWED THAT UP WITH A NEW CHRISTIAN SOLO ALBUM IN THE YEARS 2004, 2005, 2007, AND 2008. IN BETWEEN THOSE RELEASES, HE ALSO RECORDED AND RELEASED AT LEAST FIVE WORSHIP ALBUMS. IN LATE 2010 HE WENT INTO THE STUDIO WITH MIKE PORTNOY AND GUITARIST STEVE MORSE (DIXIE DREGS, KANSAS, DEEP PURPLE) TO RECORD AN ALBUM THAT IS CURRENTLY NAMELESS AND BEING SHOPPED AROUND TO LABELS.

and a Testimony, too

BY JEFF MCCORMACK



He is a driving force behind the Radiant Records label (radiantrecords.com), has a fan club that he edits and releases custom members-only CDs and DVDs through multiple times a year, is a husband and father, and yet somewhere in all of that found time to write a biography that came out this year also entitled *Testimony*, as well as read it himself for an audio book format. Along with it he released another two-disc collection of tunes in *Testimony 2*. I was thrilled to be able to catch up with Neal near the end of August for a few minutes to discuss some of these items:

JM: Neal, why is your material not more readily available or distributed in the Christian market?
Neal: I have tried, and have looked into that, but it just has never seemed to take hold. The Christian market doesn't seem to get the prog thing, so I am still in the same market as I was before. Like any market, it can be hard to break in to; I just leave it up to the Lord if that door ever opens.

What is up with this newer project with Portnoy and Steve Morse?
We finished that project up before I went out for the *Testimony 2 Tour* these past few months, and it is currently being shopped around to labels. Rather than being a Radiant Records release, there is a desire for that project to break out into other markets, since it is not really a prog album.

What are you working on presently?
I am currently working on finishing up the audio for the *Testimony 2* live release, which will be a three disc set, live from Los Angeles. Also, I am finishing up the audio for a new live CD/DVD release for Transatlantic, due to be released in October. After that, I am not sure what my next project will be, I am just take it day by day and praying to see. I have written most of a musical story about the life of Jesus. It is kind of a prog version of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, so that may be something for the future, but nothing is decided yet.

Transatlantic recently released a live CD/DVD set – how is this one going to be different? Any plans for a new studio album?
We've been touching base a bit about this new live release, but no discussion of a new studio album yet. The new live stuff is different footage from different nights than was released on the previous set. The audio stuff is from Manchester, the last night of the tour, and the video is from Tilburg. Those gigs were really good, and where well filmed, and we thought it would be a shame not to share it with people.

So, out of all of the projects you do, which is the one that most excites you?
Oh wow, that is a tough question man.

Obviously you love it all or you wouldn't do it, but is there any one of them that brings more pleasure to do?
(laughs) I really do enjoy it all. There aren't any of them that I feel less enthusiastic about. What I am most enthusiastic about is doing God's will. When I feel something is clearly what God wants me to do, then I am excited to do it, and that is what I have felt about everything I have done in the past eight years or so. I think I enjoy the solo stuff just a little bit more, because it is my comfort zone where I call all the shots, but I also love the collaborating. I just have to say it's all good.

Out of all your solo albums, does any one of them stand out or seem more popular or a bigger seller than the rest?
I would have to say *Sola Scriptura*. Probably because it is considered heaviest, and people tend to like heavy, I think.

So your next album will be a death metal album then?
(laughs) Who knows?!

On the *Testimony 2* release we hear a little collaboration with the Spock's Beard guys; any talk of recording or reunion shows in the future?
No there hasn't been any talk of anything like that. We did play some songs together at the High Voltage festival in London last month and there is some footage from that which will be bonus footage on the *Testimony 2* DVD coming out in November.

So, you have the new book, and just recently you finished recording an audio version. Tell us a bit about that whole process.
The audio book was much harder than I thought. It was not an easy task. You wouldn't think it would be that hard, but it was. I'd get in there and be lucky to get through a paragraph; I'd get to where I'd feel like I couldn't talk; I don't know what it was. It was just a problem with flubbing the words, the problem was trying to annunciate the words clearly enough for a lot of my fans where English is a second language. So I had to make sure my diction was clear, but not too clear to where it would sound goofy. And it is not so much about the words as it was about performance. I wanted the words to convey feeling and have a right sound to it. Plus, I put a lot of things in it that were off-the-cuff and not in the book. I would sing the lyrics rather than just read them, and other fun things like.

Any parting words of wisdom?
Always take your wallet with you on stage? (laughs)… I would just say as the Scripture says, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." And wait upon the Lord. That is how I am living my life now, and it's great, I've never been happier.

What | **Orphaned Land** | Says

ISRAEL'S ORPHANED LAND IS EASILY ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND ORIGINAL ACTS THE PROGRESSIVE METAL SCENE HAS ENCOUNTERED IN A LONG TIME. WITH ROOTS STRONGLY GROUNDED IN THE DEATH METAL GENRE – WHERE THEY STARTED ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO – THEY HAVE EVOLVED INTO A DYNAMIC MUSICAL FORCE; THEIR CAPTIVATING AND CINEMATIC MIDDLE EASTERN METAL REFRESHINGLY TRANSCENDS ANY ONE GENRE. CLEARLY, WHAT DREAM THEATER HAS BEEN TO NORTH AMERICA OR WHAT OPETH HAVE BECOME TO SCANDINAVIA, ORPHANED LAND IS TO THE MIDDLE EAST. *SIN KILLER'S* NORMAN LIMA (BRAZIL) RECENTLY HAD A CHANCE TO EXPLORE THE WORLD OF ORPHANED LAND WITH GUITARIST MATTI SVATIZKY, AND IN COLLABORATION WITH OUR BRETHREN IN BRAZIL, WE FELT THIS WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE READERS OF *HEAVEN'S METAL* TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS AMAZING BAND.

INTRODUCTION BY JONATHAN SWANK | INTERVIEW BY NORMAN LIMA [SIN KILLER WEBZINE]

"I choose to keep an open mind as much as I can and not focus only in one religion's traditions. I think that the spirit of life exists in all the beings in nature and that every being should be highly respected."

Let me introduce myself, this is Norman with the Brazilian Christian webzine called Sin Killer. Thank you for the time given to answer my questions.
Hi there, I'm Matti Svatizky, Orphaned Land's guitarist, and I'll be happy to answer your questions.

Any news you'd like to start telling about Orphaned Land?
There is always something that is happening. Right now we are working on our debut live DVD, which will be out this November. We have filmed it a few months ago in Tel Aviv and we are very excited towards its release. We are also having a full headline European tour next to the release.

What does the name Orphaned Land mean? It sounds so good to me.
At first the band was called Resurrection. It was a cool name that fit a typical death metal band, and that's what we tried to be in the early days. After a short while we decided to go in a different direction and decided that a name change is necessary. We found the phrase "Orphaned Land" inside lyrics of a famous Israeli singer and made up our minds that this could be a good name for us. I think that this name captures a lot of what the band is about. It is a kind of a paradox in a way, because the band sings about spiritual things – about God and man – and this name kind of leaves you with a melancholic atmosphere, like no one is watching and all that we do is in vain. The name is very abstract, it could mean different things to different people, and this is also one of the reasons we have chosen it.

You are on the road for almost 20 years. What kind of lessons do you guys learn from this?
20 years is indeed a long time in which we've been around. We get all kinds of reactions from people, usually good ones. We have some pretty hardcore fans who tattoo our logo and lyrics from our songs on their bodies. I think that it's great that people take us so seriously, because I think that in the end of the day our message is super positive, and the fact that people understand it and go such a long way with us only proves that there are good people out there who believe in positive things.

About the festivals you've played in … Wacken Open-Air, Summer-Breeze, Hellfest and ProgPower … some special highlight of the shows?
We have played in many festivals so far and in over 30 countries around the world. Each festival is great and cool in its own way. Of course, that you can learn a lot from each one, about the production, management, etc. … a side which is very important in the show business, even for bands. We have played to crowds of over 20,000 people sometimes and it is always great getting the energies from this amount of people who come to listen to good music and have fun.

In your view, what differentiates Orphaned Land from other bands in the world? Just culture?
No, I don't think so. Israel is quite a Western country in its nature. It's a democracy, which is run in a very European sort of way. We could have done something which is a lot more conventional, like what we did in our early days, but we chose to do something less conventional, because we knew that in order to stand out you have to be very innovative. We chose to bring the ethnical side as a part of what we do also, because it was something new and exciting, and I bet that if other bands would do it at the time we would have found something else which would have been different in its way.

If you could boil down "the message" of your music into one theme, let's say Orphaned Land, what would that be?
I think that our main message is that people are really the same behind all the cultural masks and the colors of their skins. When people from different cultures listen to the same music it arouses in them feelings which are very much alike – both intellectually and spiritually. Our systems are very similar, there is over 99% of similarity between one person's and another's DNA structure and it's a shame that over this tiny 1% difference such bad things happen in the world. That's what we are here for, to remind people that all in all we are looking for the same things in this life, so why the hell waste it over unimportant things?

I think this question is new to you. Let's do it. I always read the news about the band in Christian websites. You know something about this scene [also known as "white metal"]? Accepted to play at a Christian festival?
I've heard the name before, but this is not exactly our style. Our music is very spiritual, but you can't associate it to one religion, even though that we are all Jewish in the band, and come from Israel. Our Middle Eastern sound is something that also drives it away of being strictly Christian. Of course, we respect everybody's beliefs and right to make any music they want and deliver their message in their way.

What religious background do you come from?
Like I said, we are all Jewish in the band. I myself come from quite a traditional family. My family celebrates the Jewish holidays and keeps some of the Jewish customs. I, however, choose not to strictly follow all the customs and rules. I choose to keep an open mind as much as I can and not focus only in one religion's traditions. I think that the spirit of life exists in all the beings in nature and that every being should be highly respected.

Last question. Who are your guitar heroes? And what band you have heard more lately?
There are many guitar heroes who have inspired me along the way. There are David Gilmour, Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, Eric Clapton, and of course the list goes on and on. Lately I went back to the old Pink Floyd stuff after giving it a rest for a few years. It is really a great band – if not the greatest. Gotta love 'em.

The second part of the last question (laughs). Let everyone know what's on your mind about any subject you like.
I think that every person is entitled to have his own thoughts and beliefs about the world. Our life's paths have led us to think like we do. Therefore, we should learn to respect anyone, especially if we believe that God's masterplan is in charge of every little thing that happens.

Thanks again. Stay strong and good.
Thanks, man. You, too. Be well.

[Published courtesy sinkillerwebzine.blogspot.com]

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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads

BEHOLD THE KINGDOM
Sicking the dogs of metal...

By Mark Blair Glunt

"Behold the Kingdom of the dead that rise again!" a proclamation of the dead in Christ rising in reference of God's Kingdom. This being the death core anthem to Behold the Kingdom's final song "The Valley of Elah" from their debut release. It kind of sums up who they are as a band, the reason they perform. It is rare in this day to find a band that really has their chops up and are very ministry oriented. Behold the Kingdom is one of those.

This Ohio based quintet features Riley Snyder and Derrik Young on guitars, Mark Baker on bass and Joe Bellmer on vocals. Founding member and drummer Cliff DeWeese, laid down the drum track for the new recording on Rottweiler Records. He has recently left the band. The new collection The Eyes of the Wicked Will Fail was released in August of this year presenting ten brutal songs inspired by bands like early Impending Doom, Black Dahlia Murder, Job for a Cowboy & Sleeping Giant.

Behold the Kingdom started in 2007, when Cliff and Riley began taking their faith seriously. They left secular bands intent on playing for the Father. The guys teamed up with two others and Arelim was formed. A year later Mark and Derrik replaced those members and they changed their name to Behold the Kingdom. They went through a couple vocalists until Joe finished up the current line up in early 2010. Derrik says the name describes what they want to do, "Like the Kingdom of God … our goal is to bring Jesus everywhere we go, to bring heaven wherever we go."

It was last spring when Behold the Kingdom was asked to play a show with Grave Robber at the Vineyard Café in Bellefontaine, OH. At that time Grave Robber's lead singer, Shawn Browning had just launched his new label Rottweiler Records. He was very impressed by their live show. He told the band it was obvious they were very serious about ministry and he appreciated their level professionalism. It was just what he was looking for. A few weeks later after prayerful consideration, contracts were signed and Behold the Kingdom became the second official signed band to Rottweiler.

News bullets

HM Magazine has officially gone out-of-print, pointing to its "digi-editions" (online and app versions) as the future of the publication. Plans are for a free-to-all Special Christmas Edition (December 2011) issue to give people an all-access look at the publication, followed by monthly digi-editions starting in January. Digital subscriptions will start off at the super low price of $6 for a year, which will eventuall go up to $12 for 12 monthly issues. Individual copies will sell for $1.99 each.

Lance King is releasing a new album, *A Moment In Chiros*. Known for his powerful voice in previous bands (Pyramaze, Balance of Power), this one is right up there with quality metal with equal parts prog-metal, power metal and melodic metal.

The DJ known as Clutch recently had **Megadeth**'s **Dave Mustaine** on his show to discuss where the band is at following the release of *TH1RT3EN*. You can find a link at the NEWS tab at hmmag.com

The Great Commission has made a video for the song "Weight of the World" from its *Heavy Worship* album, as well as touring with A Bullet for Pretty Boy and The Air I Breathe.

Demon Hunter and **The Showdown**'s fabulous drummer, **Yogi Watts**, is sitting on the drumstool for hardcore legends Throwdown on its *Brawloween Tour*.

P.O.D. has signed a multi-album deal with Razor & Tie. A new album is slated for 2012. The band has already tapped Howard Benson for production duties. "We are really excited to be starting a new chapter of our career with Razor & Tie. We just can't wait to put out the new album and show everyone what we've worked so hard on," adds P.O.D vocalist **Sonny Sandoval**. "P.O.D. is a relevant, legendary, iconic band and we are very excited that they have decided to work with us," commented Razor & Tie Co-Owners Cliff Chenfeld and Craig Balsam. "We have made a real commitment to releasing quality music from the best rock bands and signing P.O.D. is a serious statement about how serious and passionate we are."

The Athens, Georgia-based melodic metal band **THEOCRACY** will release their new album *As The World Bleeds* on November 25th in Europe through Ulterium Records and on November 21st in North America through Nightmare Records. The album will also be released as a double gatefold vinyl edition, strictly limited to 500 copies worldwide. Track listing: 01. I AM; 02. The Master Storyteller; 03. Nailed; 04. Hide in the Fairytale; 05. The Gift of Music; 06. 30 Pieces of Silver; 07. Drown; 08. Altar to the Unknown God; 09. Light of the World; 10. As the World Bleeds. Check out an album teaser at YouTube: http://youtu.be/lRqVm0eLt68

Lust Control is writing new tunes. The band plans on recording in early 2012 for an EP. Look for their heaviest song yet, "Finger," to appear on this (CD/vinyl!) release.

NEW MUSIC Spotlight:

Behold The Kingdom | cont'd:

The band agrees the new record is brutal and quite graphic. But they assure us that even the most graphic of lyrics come straight from the Bible. The title, The Eyes of the Wicked will Fail, comes from the book of Job.

Behold the Kingdom's attitude and influence on the local scene reminds us of Stryper in their early years. They impress with their musical ability, their stage presence and they speak boldly of Christ. They have lots of respect from non-Christian and Christian bands and fans alike. For them it is always about ministry, being a light to a broken world, then almost equally important is to play a brutal tight show with lots of stage presence. They will rock your face off, then preach the word; no matter where they are playing – whether bar or Christian club. And people still love them. That could be because all the guys are very relational and easy to like. One minute they are having a light saber duel with a fan, the next they are praying with or encouraging someone who is struggling.

Their live shows are what must be seen. These guys are true entertainers. They are constantly on the move, doing scream and response with some of their anthems, songs loaded with breakdowns and change ups. Mixed with both clean vocals and low growls only deathcore fans appreciate. Mark Baker adds, "And lots of hair whips!" They know how to have fun, yet when it's time to be serious they lay it down dark and heavy. If they come anywhere close to you, do yourself a huge favor and go.

NEW FROM LANCE KING

A MOMENT IN CHIROS

etheric progressive power metal from the former voice of pyramaze, balance of power, for fans of redemption, dream theater and symphony x with a nod at greats led zeppelin

Lance has chosen "Human Trafficking" (sex slavery), one of the fastest growing criminal activities worldwide as the charitable cause he would like to champion, profits from this album will go to efforts to abolish this slave trade worldwide through an organization called "NOT FOR SALE"!

Distributed by Sony/ RED

Release Date: 11/11/11

www.NightmareRecords.com

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ALBUM REVIEWS

JERUSALEM
SHE
She marks the welcome return of these hard hitting Swedes, with their first all new studio album since 1994's acclaimed *Prophet*. It's the story of an unfaithful bride and unwavering love of her husband to bring redemption to her even in her sin. Musically, *She* picks up roughly where *Prophet* left off, in U2 style pop/rock territory, leaving largely behind the quasi-metal leanings of earlier material like "Plunder Hell." Ulf Christiansson's familiar voice carries the story, although the band as a trio now seems to limit the sound. There are some hard rocking numbers, like "Come On," tempered by slower moving songs like "She," but as always, Ulf has a poignant word for us in the inspired "Supernatural" – "Don't you know your God by now?" – that is the high mark of the album. Beautiful digipak packaging, but very difficult to find in the US. Check them out at jerusalem.se [Pierced Records] Chris Gatto

HOPE FOR THE DYING
DISSIMULATION
HFTD play the best kind of metal – by that I don't mean the style, but the type that takes a while to dig your teeth into, but when you do it gets lodged in your brain and won't go away. Influences (and even subgenres) are all over the place – progressive to extreme, classic to modern, it's all here. But with one important difference – on *Dissimulation* this mix of influences really works to create a cohesive piece of art. [Facedown] Loyd Harp

EDGE OF ETERNITY
S/T
Given the unfortunate lack of female-fronted Christian metal bands that stylistically compare to counterparts like Nightwish and Epica, I was excited to hear this new offering from Edge of Eternity. Was it realistic to expect songwriting and production on par with the aforementioned? Not really, but I quickly realized that it's still a very solid to good album. The best track, "Unholy," starts off heavy, leading to the bridge with beautiful singing and keyboards, before kicking into a melodic and memorable chorus. This song is hopefully an example of great things to come from this very promising band. [Indie] Chris Beck

IMAGES OF EDEN
REBUILDING THE RUINS
It seems every time I devourer an Images of Eden CD I feel as though I am peeking into principle songwriter Gordon Tittsworth's personal spiritual journals. *Rebuilding the Ruins* is no exception, being a concept recording of spiritual and emotional growth through hard times. It seems every recording of theirs is a gigantic step up to a higher level in production, songwriting and maturity. IOE is one great treasure to find for those who love prog metal with an emotional side – a reflection on the works of Fates Warning, Queensryche and Iron Maiden. My favorite tunes are the dark and powerful "My Stigmata" with its pounding drum track and thrash style vocals and the musically aggressive, down and dirty title track. For a darker and more mature release, check out this third installment of this exceptionally talented band. [Nightmare] Mark Glunt

VARIOUS ARTISTS
CHRISTIAN PROGRESSIVE ROCK 4
This is the fourth CPR (Christian Progressive Rock) compilation from Righteous Sinner Records and features some of the best current faith-based prog rock bands. The track which stands out the most is Pursuit's "Judah." There is also a fine remix of Iona's "Let Your Glory Fall" which translates into a wonderful worship song. Others who appear in the collection are Visual Cliff, Gene Crout, Farpoint, Kinetic Element, KDB3, Supernal Endgame, Chicago's jazz fusion band Syzygy and Eric Parker (former vocalist for Glass Hammer). The production is above par for all the tracks. This collection is well worth the purchase and a great way to get exposure to some of the finest art rock in Christendom. [Righteous Sinner] Mark Glunt

IRONWILL
UNTURNED
You've got to have either a lot of courage or a lot of arrogance to call the lead off track of your debut full-length "Visionaries." And yet, *Unturned* might possibly live up to that. Ironwill strike first and strike hard and cause me to miss the days when hardcore was less about breakdowns and girlie haircuts and more about passion, intensity, urgency, ferocity and even (gasp!) musicianship. But this isn't a revivalist band either. Much like stalwarts Stretch Armstrong, Strongarm, Falling Cycle, etc. Ironwill combines the best of past, present and future and creates a work of art that will be worth listening to again when the current flavour-of-the-month has faded. Simultaneously melodic, metallic and progressive (instrumental track "Sri Lanka" wouldn't be out of place with label mates The Blue Letter), with just a few breakdowns (do they need them?), Blood & Ink scores again. [Blood & Ink] Loyd Harp

ONWARD TO OLYMPAS
THE WAR WITHIN
Their sophomore effort intriguingly starts off literally where *This World is Not My Home* finished – that haunting melodic guitar riff. While similarities to their debut are certainly present, *War* is slightly more stripped-down, less technical, perhaps more focused as a result. It's still brutally heavy with touches of the melodic, with lots of spiritual content in the lyric, and enough of thrashtasktic riffs to keep more traditional metalheads interested. [Facedown] Loyd Harp

BROKEN SILENCE
DISCERNING THE TIMES
Hawaii's Broken Silence was another one of those bands from the late 80's that came a bit too late to the scene to make an impact. This well-produced (David Zaffiro) and well-crafted music never scored the band a record deal, probably because in the 90's no one was signing this brand of melodic metal. Sharing much in common with Stryper (primarily singer Daniel Ysais) and Holy Soldier – and Winger and Whitesnake for that matter – these guys didn't break any new ground, but the songs sound good, solid … very listenable. With the exception of the ballad "If I Love" – where the singer sounds really awkward and the lyrics get a bit cheesy ("If I love I can sail across the ocean blue, make a better world for me and you") – most of the songs rock with conviction. [Retroactive] Jonathan Swank

radrockers.com, bombworksrecords.com, roxxproductions.com, guardian1.net, rivelrecords.com, saintsite.com

SAVIOUR MACHINE
LEGEND III:II
Well, here it is … one of the most controversial releases in the history of our scene – and I'm not talking about the lyrics. As many are already aware, this release is not sanctioned by Eric Clayton. It's an amalgam of recorded material – previously unreleased on CD format – from the *Legend III* sessions. Musically, the concepts and melodies are both beautiful and haunting, and mostly consistent with what we've heard up to this point in the *Legend* series. But from a purely objective standpoint this feels disjointed, the full instrumentation is absent on most tracks – where are all of the guitars and acoustic drums … and those huge choral elements? Long, silent breaks between tracks disrupt the flow unlike the previous releases where songs melded seamlessly together … and the last few tracks really drag. Production quality is okay, but not at the same level as the other *Legend* discs – sounds like good quality demo material. Oddly, there are no liner notes, lyrics or credits. Controversy aside, from a purely musical standpoint use caution; while clearly not as horrible as purported, this pales in comparison to the other *Legend* releases, not surprising when you consider the circumstances under which it was released. In my opinion, sadly both label and artist lose on this one. [Massacre] Jonathan Swank

(See saviourmachine.com for Eric's full response to this release and details about his plans to re-record Legend Part III. See lethalconflict.wordpress.com/tag/saviour-machine for a full Massacre Records statement)

SAVIOUR MACHINE
1990 DEMO 20TH ANNIVERSARY LTD EDITION
In stark contrast to the controversial *Legend III:II* from Massacre, this is an official Eric Clayton sanctioned release. Remixed from the original 1990 analog recordings, these songs sound better than ever. Having not listened to this demo in over a decade, the songs sound fresh, revitalized – the sound quality superior to the original version. This mixture of songs (many of which later showed up on *SMI*) is a testimony to both the band's talent and their propensity to write dark, brooding songs with metaphorical lyrics. Interestingly, many of these early songs had a fast pace and a much more straight-forward exegesis. Of course, "The Revelation" is the epic 5-part apocalyptic song that would give fans a taste of where Saviour Machine would eventually focus their endeavors. The lengthy instrumental "Church of the Vatican Slaves," included here, was not on the original demo release. Essential for dedicated fans, Eric also released a *Limited Signature Edition* package which includes the CD plus a vinyl picture disc. [Paradox/Retroactive] Jonathan Swank

A HILL TO DIE UPON
OMENS
"I am the black space between the stars, I am the darkness that can be felt." It is this kind of writing that made us rave about A Hill to Die Upon's debut, calling them the best new extreme metal band out there, because clearly they are delivering everything dark and heavy we love about metal. So now we come to the much awaiting sequel. Did they do it? Did this death/black metal hybrid, corpse painted Midwest band surpass album #1? The answer, I have to say, is no. This is a brilliant album and there is much to love about it, but the doomy feel this time around seems to dull the brilliance sometimes, making *Omens* a point below *Infinite*. That said, they are the best band doing this style today. Shades of my all-time favorite death metal band Bolt Thrower, as well as the holy black assault on our ancient enemy in "Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down," counterpoint the beauty shown in "Nehushtan" and the sleeper track. Pick this up! [Bombworks] Chris Gatto

CROSSFORCE
ROCKIN' TIL THE FINAL DAY
One of the most overlooked bands of the mid 80's has finally been brought to CD. The boys had a classic metal style led by Tony's incredible vocals, having great power and enough grit to make for a great metal singer. The CD contains not only their awesome 1986 demo, remastered for improved sound, but also an unreleased 1987 live demo that was used to shop for a deal with Frontline records. For me, this brought back memories of the many listens and almost wearing out the original cassette. If you are new to the band, like classic 80's better than average demo quality releases, you need this one. This is one of those bands that should have been a major name in the metal world of the day. [Roxx] Jeff McCormack

GUARDIAN1
EMPIRE
Original Guardian vocalist/guitarist Paul Cawley and drummer Rikk Hart have resurfaced in the music world under the name Guardian1, with a new 3 song EP digital download. Very melodic harmonies, with a sound reminiscent of the direction of their First Watch album, but with a slightly grittier, mildly modern rock guitar feel to it, especially noticeable in songs like "Stand Up." No real new ground broken, but it is nice to hear these two making music again and I think it shows promise, making me look forward to what they bring us next. [G1 Records] Jeff McCormack

GOLDEN RESURRECTION
MAN WITH A MISSION
Release number two finds this Swedish melodic metal powerhouse band featuring the vocals of Christian Liljegren (Narnia, Divine Glory) and the sweet guitar and vocal work of Tommy ReinXeed (ReinXeed) back with another excellent slab of what they do best. Nothing "new" sound wise, but is there really a need when they already sound this good? Lyrics are just as bold, but I find them a bit more mature this time around, with less of a cliché feel to them. A fine sophomore release that raises the bar a bit higher. The digital download version has two bonus cover tunes, Kansas' "Point of No Return" and Gary Moore "The End of the World," both well worth the purchase. [Liljegren] Jeff McCormack

SAINT
THE REVELATION
This is what happens when you take an already great album, and remix it and make it better? Saint's 2006 release, *The Mark*, was recently taken back in the studio and remixed to produce the new digital download album *The Revelation*. I liked the original, but this one is so much better I think. The overall sound is cleaner, the guitars are not as muddy (odd how you don't always notice something is muddy until you hear them not-muddy), and it just sounds grittier and more powerful throughout. If you liked the original, check out this new edition – it is well worth it. [Armor] Jeff McCormack

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